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SCRIPTURAL VIEWS  
OF  
THE SABBATH OF GOD.

BY THE  
REV. JOHN JORDAN, B.A.  
VICAR OF ENSTONE, OXON.

“Ye shall keep the Sabbath; for it is holy unto you: Six days may work be done; but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest; holy to the Lord.”

Exod. xxxi. 14, 15.

“The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.”—Luke vi. 5.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE work now presented to the reader is the fruit of long, and frequent, reflection and preaching upon the subject by the Author. It is not therefore hastily got up for the present necessity, when the sabbath is demanding in its defence all the efforts of those who know its value and love its blessedness ; but it is nevertheless, as the writer would persuade himself, peculiarly adapted to the urgency of the moment, as endeavouring to fortify this holy ordinance from the armoury of God's Word, and to secure its principles and practice upon that which is, and must be, its

only foundation,—the Holy Scripture. So many, various, and contradictory, are the popular, and even the theological views, prevailing with respect to the sabbath, that there seems to be the call as of old, “We have need that one teach us again which be the first principles of the oracles of God.” To comply with this demand has been the single aim of the Author, in treating of the principles upon which the sabbath can alone be based. He pretends to nothing more than to have attempted to follow the direct leadings and instruction of Scripture respecting it, and he trusts that he has been enabled to do this in such a way, as neither to force Scripture beyond its meaning, nor to miss any of the matter that it contains illustrative of his subject. He has earnestly striven in this particular to obey the precept of the great lawgiver of Israel, “Thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish therefrom.”

In these times of controversy respecting Church Principles, the change of day, for the observance of the sabbath, from the seventh day to the first, is one of those points which persons of High-Church views are accustomed to pride themselves upon, as a proof of the authority of the Church, in other words, of Tradition ; and to contend that this is an undeniable instance of the exercise of such authority, for that there is none in Scripture for the change, and it was wholly and entirely done by Church authority. The writer confidently trusts that he has altogether, and for ever, silenced such a boast as this ; for he is convinced that he has shown such proof from the New Testament, as he was himself surprised to find when he came to search the point out fully, and as he feels assured must foreclose the arguments of all gainsayers. That which he has thus succeeded in, respecting one such

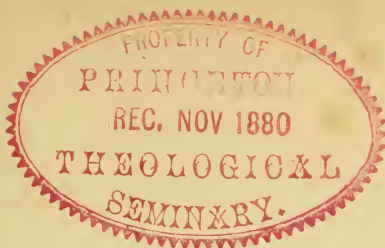


topic, involved in what are called Church Principles, he is well persuaded may be shown to be equally true as regards other points, and he hopes ere long to have an opportunity of explaining what his own views are of real evangelical Church Principles.

It has been the writer's privilege to be allowed to bear a part in the preparation of the "Tracts on the Sabbath," which are now in the course of publication, and in the composition of his own Tract he had occasion to adapt and use some few of the arguments that are contained in this volume. Having thus referred to these tracts he cannot forbear acquainting the reader with the fact, that the same man of God, to whom the religious world is indebted for the origin and wide circulation of them, has been in a great degree instrumental in the appearance of this volume. Consideration for his friend's feel-

ings forbid the Author to say more, but his own will not allow him to say less. May that friend not be disappointed, but may the work, of which he is a sharer, effect its desired end,—the glory of God, and the increase of piety amongst our fellow-men.





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## INTRODUCTION.

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IN our title we have styled the holy day of which we treat, "The sabbath of God," and that not without a purpose. In the first place, we believe this designation of it to be both scriptural and true. It is expressly so termed in Exod. xx., being called, "The sabbath of the Lord our God." This alone, then, would justify our appellation of it, if we had not an object in so naming it. But it does seem to us essential, in this our day of rebuke and blasphemy, distinctly and avowedly to recognise it as the sabbath of God. It was, indeed, as our Saviour declares, mercifully "made for man," but it was so made by God, and therefore is the sabbath of God; it was not only so made, but first observed by God,

for when he had ended all his works that he had made, he rested on the seventh day and sanctified it, and it became therefore, by his observance as well as appointment, the sabbath of God. But do men regard it as the sabbath of God?—Do they not rather practically, by the manner in which they misapply it, lay claim to it as their own, and not God's day?—Is there not a common notion abroad in the world, that, to use this day to the glory and honour of God, in works of devotion and spiritual exercises, is to deprive men of a day which is theirs for pleasure, and amusement, and relaxation? Surely this notion is the very root and foundation of all the evils connected with sabbath desecration. Men seem to think it is their day, not God's day, and that, having been made for man, man may use it according to his own will, rather than God's will. Now it is just to combat this error, and to expose its fallacy, that we desire to elevate the sabbath to its proper dignity, place, and worth, by hold-

ing it up to the contemplation of the world as no day of man, but as the sabbath of God.

The term sabbath, when used as the title of that day, which under the Christian dispensation is set apart as the weekly day of rest and devotion, is a term against which exception is taken by various persons upon different grounds. It is objected by some, that the term being judaical savours of phariseism, and so originates a prejudice, by its very name, against that beauty of holiness and excellency of purpose which properly belong to it, as primarily designed by God. In this, however, there is a very great mistake ; for, with respect to the use of any term whatever, we may very justly adopt the reasoning of the great dramatist, and ask with him,

“ What ’s in a name ?

A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.”

But since the name rose is associated in our thoughts with the delightful odour of its balmy fragrance, the term rose

revives within us, by its very expression, the remembrance of the flower's season and its pleasures ; and roseate, or rosy become synonymes of grace and elegance, denoting in us sensations agreeable to those derived from the flower, whose fragrance originated the whole train of our ideas. And just so is it with the word sabbath. If a pharisaical severity be inculcated as the principle of the sabbath's observance, instead of that glad, and joyous, and free spirit, which belongs unto holiness and the presence of the Lord,—for “where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty,” and there too are always found the concomitants of the free spirit, “joy and peace in believing ;”—if, instead of these, the sabbath be made sad and austere, no wonder that the term conveys to us such associations as we have unhappily been habituated to, and thus the word itself seems to lose that beauty and grace which God intended it to teach. If again, on the contrary, there be inculcated as the

principle of sabbath observance, not a hard service and bondage, making the day irksome and heavy to be borne, but those spiritual and sanctifying views of it, which are revealed to us in Scripture as the design and purport of its appointment by God, then will the term sabbath not prejudice us against the grace and blessing of the Lord's day ; then will it not be associated in our minds with pharisaical severity or judaical strictness ; but it will teach us to understand and know the full excellency of the term itself, that sabbath is rest, that its very signification denotes that which the weary and heavy-laden need, and would gladly partake of, and that it is, as declared upon the authority of God himself, " a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable," Isa. lviii. 13.

Again, it is objected, for much the same reason as the former, that the term sabbath is puritanical, and therefore distasteful, and so prejudicial. The historian Hume, writing of the reign of Charles I.,



says, "The House of Commons enacted laws for the strict observance of Sunday, which the Puritans affected to call the sabbath, and which they sanctified by the most melancholy indolence. It is to be remarked, that the different appellations of this festival were, at that time, known symbols of the different parties." The Scripture well instructs us, that, "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God;" and it is not amongst the strife of parties, where one side at least, the Royalists, had run into such extremes, as to have trodden down with their desecrations God's holy day, and where, consequently, there were great temptations and peril to the other side of being swayed too far in the opposite direction; it is not, I say, to such contradictory and erroneous doings as these, that we are to look for wise, and good, and faithful principles respecting the day of peace, and rest, and holiness. In judging of what was puritanical and what not, let us beware, that, in rejecting what we are

disposed to condemn as such, we do not reject what was scriptural, although it may have been puritanical also ; but let us sift the chaff from the wheat, and, separating the base metal from the pure, cast away the dross as worthless, but treasure up the fine gold of Ophir as an offering worthy of Him who made it.

It may yet be said, why persist in the use of a term which has been misapplied, and is susceptible, therefore, of so much misconception ? The unimpeachable reply to this is, because it is the scriptural term, and we are bound to be jealous of, faithful to, and conservative of all that is scriptural. But here we are met with a new objection. It is allowed to be scriptural, but is represented as Mosaical, and therefore no more to be conserved and used under the Christian dispensation, than all else that was Mosaical. Now if it were only scriptural because Mosaical, that is, because so peculiar and proper to the Jewish dispensation, that it passed away with it, and can have no place in

the Christian, that indeed, if proved, would be a reason for renouncing not only the name, but the institution itself. But we contend, that the *scripturality* of the sabbath, if the expression may be permitted to us, is not Mosaical alone, but was Adamic, Noachial, Patriarchal, Mosaical, and Christian; that the sabbath, in all its principles and excellences, is adapted to, was recognised by, and is to be found in, every era of Scripture, and every dispensation of God; that this its scripturality gives it an authority with all who believe the Scriptures to be the inspired revelation of God's will to man, and a claim, therefore, to their devout and holy reverence of it as a Divine institution; and that, since it is thus seen to be an essential constituent of that religion which God has vouchsafed to man, therefore the sabbath, both in name and in spirit, is to be treasured up by man, as a sign between his God and himself, that He is our God; and we are privileged to be his servants by observing his sabbath

day, and remembering it to keep it holy.

This, then, is the main object of the following pages, to exhibit the scripturality of the sabbath, and, by drawing forth in review before the reader the truths of Scripture respecting it, to prove to him that it is of God, that it is an institution mercifully designed as a blessing for all mankind, and one therefore that we, as a people professing godliness, are bound to uphold in all its integrity and beauty, and to enjoy in all its sanctity and goodness. The times are such as make this duty at present fearfully incumbent upon us. Sabbath desecration is walking abroad through the length and breadth of the land. It is becoming rapidly, if it have not already become, a national sin. It traverses and pervades that intricate network of railway communication, which is diffusing itself over the three kingdoms, and threatens there to involve us in its ironbound and inextricable meshes. It rejoices in steam-boat excursions, flooding

the banks of our rivers with that impious revelry, and those unholy gratifications, which sabbath-breakers are invariably addicted to. It desires to increase and multiply the burthens of life, by making the post-office, that hitherto undiscovered wonder, a machine of perpetual motion, so that to those employed in it, as well as to those who shall be purveyed to by it, the Sunday shall be no sabbath day. It seeks to rob the labouring man of that portion of time which God has given to him for his own, and to appropriate to the benefit and profit of the employer the additional work, which the labourer may thus be constrained to do ; for sure we are, that eventually there would be no additional pay for Sunday work, however much the labour therein may be increased. It enters into an unjust, unwholesome, and demoralizing competition with the fair and honourable tradesman ; for it is notorious that those who traffic on the sabbath, are not so just and upright in their dealings as those who do not : nor is there any



marvel in this, for those who defraud God of the honour due to Him on this day, will care little how much they defraud their fellow-men. In a word, it is found undermining, and threatening with ruin, our whole social system, wasting men's bodily strength, overtaxing their mental powers, robbing them of the spiritual edification and privileges that belong to them, leaving them in heathen darkness and ignorance, hardening them by habitual defiance of one of God's plainest and most blessed laws, and, as the natural result and issue of all this, multiplying iniquity, and crime, and sin.

And what is the Church of God and of his Christ doing all the while, for the conservation and holiness of the sabbath of the Lord our God? While worldly men feel the need of the blessing of rest provided for them in the sabbath, and are struggling in various ways to obtain for themselves the enjoyment of the blessing; while public meetings are being held to petition the Legislature for help, and demanding that

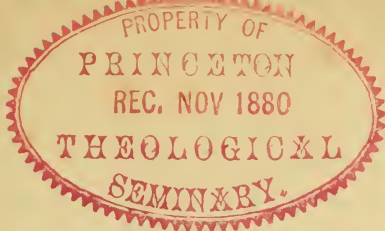
this Christian nation act out its Christianity, and maintain the privileges which have hitherto exalted it as a nation, but which are now well nigh being overwhelmed by the flood of sabbath desecration that is everywhere breaking in ; while men of business are complaining aloud against the danger they are in of being deprived of relaxation, and refreshment from toil, upon the weekly day of rest ; while they are stating the absolute, actual, and tangible practical grievances which they feel and know by sad and bitter experience ; while there is all this direct testimony upon their part to the evil they have to endure, and to the value of the privilege they are deprived of ; what is the Church, the religious portion of the community, engaged in ? They are discussing and weighing, first, the nature of the sabbath, and then how much, or rather how little, of the sabbath principle, is in our day to be turned into practice, and made effectual. Now we contend that the sabbath principle is one and in-

divisible. We ask for the sabbath that which our laws accord to every other day ; that each one is a whole, and that no portion of one can be taken apart from the remainder, so that the law knows no part of a day. We demand this for the sabbath. We ask no part of it, but a whole sabbath. We cannot break or lessen the principle of God's law, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy." That law in its integrity, unmutilated, and undefiled, is all we ask. We claim what God has given. We will not exorbitantly demand more, but in faithfulness we cannot accept less. We remember that our God is a jealous God, and justly so towards us his creatures, respecting all his laws and enactments. In jealousy for his honour as bound up in the day which he has graciously bestowed upon man, we claim the whole principle of holiness, and its application to the sabbath in such a way that the whole day be kept holy. A sabbath, a whole sabbath, and no less than a sabbath, is all we ask, and is what by the

written word of our God we know that we are entitled to.

This, then, we repeat again, in conclusion, is the main object of the following pages, in which it has been attempted to exhibit, and to base upon the unerring foundation of the incorruptible word, that principle of holiness which we believe to be the one chief and pervading principle of the sabbatical institution. It is a holy day, made holy of God, to be kept holy by man, and to be made obvious as holiness unto the Lord. This is what we are persuaded is the truth of Scripture respecting it ; and this, we trust, will be fully made manifest in the chapters that succeed. May they be blessed of God to his own glory, to the hallowing of the sabbath day, and thereby, as a means of grace, to the sanctification of those souls, who may be led by it to think more worthily of God's day, and to remember it to keep it holy more faithfully for the future.

*Enstone, Oxon, Nov. 18, 1847.*



## CHAPTER I.

### INSTITUTION OF THE SABBATH, AND ITS PRINCIPLES AS DEVELOPED THEREFROM.

“Hath it not been told you from the beginning?”

Isaiah xl. 21.

IN the time of man's innocency in Paradise, there was imposed upon him by his Creator only one law,—“of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat,” Gen. ii. 17. But while thus exempt from all other commandments, certain *principles*, incidental to his nature, and needful for the good of himself and his posterity, were revealed to him, as rules of action, and as expressing the Divine will for his and their guidance during their sojourn upon earth. Such, for example, was the holy principle upon which is founded the solemn bond of marriage, and which is recorded in these words, “Therefore shall a man leave his father

and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife : and they shall be one flesh," Gen. ii. 24. For this, as recorded by Moses, is not given in the form and manner of a law, but as a just and necessary inference from what God had just done for Adam. He had made for him one wife, and only one, and this of course established the principle, that man should have but one wife, and "forsaking all others should keep her only unto him so long as they both should live." — Accordingly Moses, having stated the fact, as recognized and acknowledged by Adam, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh," proceeds to record also the general principle arising out of the fact, "therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife : and they shall be one flesh." This principle, however early disregarded,—as evidenced in the case of Lamech, Gen. iv. 19, before the flood ; however much forgotten, and therefore neglected, in the times of the patriarchs, who allowed themselves concubines, as well as in some cases more than one wife ; however much relaxed by the law of Moses, who, "because of the hard-

ness of men's hearts, suffered them to put away their wives," Matt. xix. 8,—still endured, like every other principle uttered by the Divine mind, immutable in nature, though not incorruptible in practice. The practice devolved upon man, and has partaken therefore of his corrupt and fallen condition ; but the nature of the principle being Divine, is, like everything of God, unchangeable and invariable. Accordingly, when our Divine Redeemer was appealed to upon earth respecting this very matter, and was asked whether the holy bond of matrimony might be broken,—as it then commonly was for every and for any cause, however slight or frivolous,—he reverted at once to the original principle upon which marriage was founded ; he reminded them of its primitive institution, and asked them, " Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female : and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife : and they twain shall be one flesh," Matt. xix. 4, 5.

But if our Saviour thus recognised, and has taught us to reverence one such principle as this,

which was revealed in the time of man's innocence in Paradise, surely it is but just and reasonable to argue, that any other principle we may discover, as there revealed, must be like the one we have been considering as immutable and invariable ; and however much it may have been from age to age neglected and disregarded, is, nevertheless, equally binding and influential now upon us. And just such a principle is that of the Sabbath, which is thus propounded. “ On the seventh day God ended his work which he had made ; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it : because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made,” Gen. ii. 2, 3. Now, here is no law, in the sense of a commandment directing something to be done or avoided, but a grand principle, having reference to the time then present, and to all time thereafter. God does not say to Adam, “ rest thou on the seventh day, and remember the sabbath day to keep it holy ;” but God himself rests thereon, and God himself blesses it, and sanctifies it ; and it must be self-evident to



every understanding mind, that Adam, who was at this time in the full enjoyment of that holy and righteous likeness to God, in which he had been made, must needs, out of the influence of that likeness, act in conformity with the mind and will of God; and as his Creator rested on the seventh day, and blessed and sanctified the sabbath day, so must Adam, also, perforce as it were of the spirit within him, so long as he was innocent, both rest on the seventh day, and bless and sanctify the sabbath day. The creature, who had been made by his Creator like unto himself, must needs act in conformity with that likeness, that is, in agreement with his own nature, and must be holy even as God is holy; manifesting his holiness by acts correspondent to the holiness of God. Consequently there can be no question whatever, that Adam, as long as he continued innocent, and we know not how long this was, must from his very nature, from the divine mind within him, have kept the sabbath of God.

What he had done in the time of his innocency, and of a free and willing mind, his

memory and reason would have prompted him to, after his transgression and fall. For if the holy sabbath was a blessing to him before, it would be infinitely more so now, since it would not only serve to remind him of those blessed seasons spent in communion with God, but would also be a special means under the grace and favour of God of assisting to recover him from his fall, and to restore him in a degree, however low, to the privileges and intercourse he had before enjoyed. It is therefore “apt, and of great credit,” that Adam would observe and keep the principle that he brought with him out of Paradise, would transmit it to his posterity, and ensure, as far as he could to them, so blessed an inheritance. And that this was really so, we trust to be able to prove by some remarkable facts, that are to be elicited from a careful examination of the history, which will be referred to in a subsequent chapter.

Meanwhile, we will consider the essential points of the principle, upon which the sabbath has been instituted, and which have not, as we conceive, been rightly discussed and discerned.

In the first place, we would remark, that although we have spoken of the words in Gen. ii. 2, 3, as revealing a principle to us, rather than formally expressing a law, yet we as God's creatures are bound to recognise and reverence the revelation of such a principle in the light of a law, and to obey it accordingly. For this our Saviour has taught us with respect to the principle of matrimony. That principle is revealed in Gen. ii. 24, just as this one is, and is not formally expressed as a law, yet our Lord has taught us to use and apply it as such, and as such therefore are we bound to receive it. So must we do the very same with the principle respecting the sabbath which God has revealed to us. His revelation of it, as being his will, makes it to us a law, and thus the sabbath principle becomes a law to us. Again, it is to be observed, that many contend that in the principle of the sabbath institution is involved the necessity of observing the seventh day of every week, rather than the first, the fourth, or any other. Now this we regard as an error. This we conceive to be "serving in the oldness of the letter, not in the newness of the spirit."

We deny not, nor question for a moment, that the first sabbath was the seventh day, that succeeding sabbaths were the succeeding seventh days, that even subsequently in the law of Sinai the seventh day was specially ordained, and that in commemoration of what God had done in the beginning ; but for all this we are prepared to contend that the seventh day was not the *principle* of the sabbath, but, so to speak, and with all reverence, the *accident* of its observance from the beginning, and thenceforward. What we mean by the seventh day being the *accident* and not the *principle* of its observance, may thus easily be explained. Had the Almighty rested midway in his work, on the fourth instead of the seventh day, and subsequently completed it, then there would have been so obvious a designation of the fourth day, as to leave no question that that was the especial one ordained for the sabbath. But since He steadily pursued his work from its commencement to its conclusion, not resting until the whole was done, resting the seventh day after six days' labour, was a necessary consequence of the completion of his work, and

thus it *happened* that the sabbath fell on the seventh day.

Hence, then, it is obvious that the sanctification of the seventh day, in preference to any other, was no part, so to speak, of the sabbath principle. It was not essential to the appointment of the sabbath that it should be the seventh day; for if this were to be insisted on, if the letter were to be adhered to, and not the spirit of the principle, then could no more than this be shown—that that first seventh day, and none other, was blessed and sanctified. Let this point be well weighed and considered by the advocates of the strict literal application of the passage to the seventh day only, and it will be seen that, to be consistent with themselves, they must allow, that not each and every returning seventh day was sanctified, but only that single and solitary one on which God rested from creation; a conclusion to which they will hardly like to come, though an inevitable one, upon their own showing and arguments. The just and reasonable mode of escaping from such an inference is, that understanding of the passage which applies it, not to

the one original day, nor yet to the periodical return of that day, which might be lost ; but according to the more appropriate principle, that one day in every seven was to be so honoured.

In fact, the true principle of the sabbath is, the sanctification, not of the seventh day, but of one day in every seven.

The example of God to man was, six days for labour, and one for rest, to be blessed and sanctified. Whether the one so recurring happened in fact to be the seventh or not, was no part of the principle. One-seventh of man's time was sanctified to God ; and as none but the present is our own, so we must render payment of the debt as it recurs. One out of every seven days was sanctified of God. One day, returning at this regular interval of time, was blessed of him. This is the immutable principle of God, abundantly made manifest by its own reasonableness, fitness, and adaptation to the bodily and spiritual wants of man. This is the indefeasible privilege of man, derived from God, who has so constituted the earth, that, though man must till it in the sweat of

his brow, his six days' labour, exercised with diligence and faithfulness, is abundantly adequate to cultivate the soil, and to provide him sufficiently with food; so leaving him the seventh day for the rest and refreshment of his body, for the sanctification and renewal of his soul.

For it is further worthy of remark, that as the seventh day is not the principle, but one day in every seven; so also the resting on the sabbath is not the principle of its observance, but the sanctification of it. The resting is but the means to an end, that end being the hallowing the sabbath day. But, mere abstinence from labour can but affect the body, and as the apostle Paul admirably remarks, "Bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things," 1 Tim. iv. 8. Therefore the mere refraining from labour on the sabbath is not the principle developed respecting it in the beginning, nor that on which the institution is based. The rest, though profitable in its degree, is not the fulness of the blessing; the rest, though needful, as clearing the day from worldly and distracting occupations, and there-

fore so far well, is not “the one thing needful;” and if divorced, as it too often is, from the essential principle of the day, its sanctification, it is capable and liable, as all blessings conferred upon man are, of being perverted to evil uses, by affording the opportunity of idleness for sin, and confirming in a notable instance the truth of the poet’s words, that

“ Satan finds some mischief still  
For idle hands to do.”

But the glory and excellency of the principle consist in sanctifying the sabbath day; in keeping the day of rest holy; in refraining from worldliness, and being exercised in godliness; in being as it were “dead in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit,” 1 Pet. iii. 18; “dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God.” “Be ye holy, for I am holy,” was the great principle and design of the law; “every one,” says St. John, “that hath this hope (of seeing God) in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure;” and when He, the pure and holy one, has purified and sanctified one day in every seven, if we would be like him, and hope to



see him face to face, we also must purify and sanctify the day to Him.

Such, when stripped of all adventitious circumstances, which the learning, wit, and ingenuity of man have contrived from age to age to heap upon it, encumbering and beclouding the subject, rather than relieving or enlightening it; such is a simple and unsophisticated view of the origin of the principle, on which rests the institution of the sabbath; a blessing of God, as wisely adapted to the absolute necessities of man, both temporal and spiritual, as it has been graciously vouchsafed to him by his Maker, and amply justifying the reasonable declaration of our Lord, “the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.” When the Almighty spake the primitive blessing upon the seventh day, and sanctified it, his word was as influential and perpetual upon it, as when he blessed Adam and Eve, and said unto them, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it;” and as surely as this latter blessing endures and prevails upon our kind, so surely does the former, which rested upon the sabbath day to

its sanctification. That hallowed blessing impressed it with a sacred character, which is indelible, and which the pious believer never fails to see, and feel, and experience, with a power and vitality, that make the same sun, and air, and trees, and all creation, seem lovelier then than on any other day. Who has not felt this glow of the sabbath, when all nature seems conspiring to keep it, and which, whether it proceeds from sensations within, or impressions from without, is a feeling which piety knows and delights in ? Thus the seventh day is sanctified of God, to be holy to himself for man's use and blessing. He may disregard, neglect, and despise it ; but he cannot change or alter its destiny. "Loving darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil ;" he may turn day into night, and scorn the value, and the glory, and the blessing of that luminary, which shines with his meridian splendour in the firmament ; but the sun still holds on his course unremittently in the heavens as God has ordained ; he rises, shines, and sets—yea, though all men refuse his genial rays. None can blot him out, or draw a cloud athwart his light, though many

shun his radiant glory. He can neither move, nor change, nor diminish, but at the bidding of Him who created him. The same is the imperishable sanctity of the sabbath. "God hath blessed, and who shall reverse it?" So long as time shall endure, and until that eternal sabbath, which remaineth for the people of God, shall have begun, the earthly sabbath must maintain the nature given to it of God; and the seventh day, that is, the one-seventh portion of time, must be sanctified, as it has been by the *fiat* of the Most High, to his own special service and honour. It is separated from all the rest of time, and hallowed of God. This is its own peculiar characteristic which God has impressed it with, that it is "holiness unto the Lord."\*

If it be objected, as it may be by some uninstructed persons, that our comparison of the sabbath to the sun is unapt and untrue, for that the sun is palpable to the visual ray, and obvious to the sight; but that the glory of the sabbath is not so discernible, and is not dis-

\* Exod. xxxi. 15, where the marginal reading is "holiness," &c.

coverable where unobserved: we answer unhesitatingly, that the error is with the objector, and not with us. What, if one incapable of vision, should elevate his sightless eyeballs towards the firmament, and because he could not discern the glory of the luminary that shone there, should deny its existence and its splendour? Would his denial lessen the brightness of the orb, obscure its rays, or hinder our enjoyment of its light? The fault is in him who wants the faculty to behold the sun, not in the sun itself, or in us who are permitted to see it. And just so it is with the sabbath. It is spiritual, and can only be spiritually discerned. Those only discern and enjoy it whose eyes are opened to see, and know its holy and sanctified nature. Others may refrain thereon from worldly labour, and, as they imagine, rest from toil while they toil for pleasure; but these must, sooner or later, learn that, with such an observance of it,

“The Sunday shines no sabbath day to them;”

and that this, like all other blessings given to us of God, has no other grace or goodness than

that which he has impressed upon it, and which he pronounced so powerfully from Mount Sinai—

“REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT  
HOLY.”

## CHAPTER II.

### PRIMEVAL HISTORY OF THE SABBATH.

“I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.”—Psa. lxxvii. 5.

It has been again and again argued by some, who contend that the sabbath was first instituted at Mount Sinai, that there is no record of, or reference to the observance of it, until that period, and that it is inconceivable, if it were in use during so long a time, that it should never once be mentioned in the history. Plausible as such an argument at first view appears, we trust to be enabled to show, that, if true in fact, the silence upon which it is founded would not warrant such a conclusion ; but that in reality the very contrary is the case, and that there are some very strong and forcible indications of the observance of the sabbath from, and through, the very earliest ages of the world.

We will first consider the supposed silence of the history. From the Creation to the Deluge was a period of 1655 years, during all which time it is said there is no mention of the observance of the sabbath, consequently, it could not have been observed. But long as this period was, what are the facts recorded of it? Most surprisingly few, only just enough to show the cause of the multiplication of sin, namely, the unhallowed marriages of the sons of God with the daughters of men, and that extreme intensity of human corruption, which required the baptism of the Flood to purge away, and justified this righteous and most terrible judgment of God; but in none of these does the opportunity of direct reference to the sabbath occur, and the paucity of the facts might fully explain the silence alleged.

Again; from the time of the Deluge to the call of Abraham was a period of 428 years, and the only incident mentioned during that space of time, is the confusion of tongues at Babel; but this again does not afford room in the history for any statements relative to the observance of the sabbath. During the patriarchal

times, indeed, the history was more full; but if at that distant period, from the enunciation of the principle of marriage, we find the greatest neglect of that principle prevailing, what wonder that the sabbath should have been neglected also, although the memory of it was not wholly lost; as we will presently endeavour to show from some very remarkable references in Scripture hardly noticed hitherto. Meanwhile, however, and just for the sake of argument, let us suppose it to be proved, that no primitive traces could be found. What then?—Will the absence of any records of the observance of a law prove that the law has never been enacted? It might afford presumption of this, but no more; and presumptions of this kind are always very questionable, as we can show by offering one on this very subject exactly similar, and which is, nevertheless, contradicted by the record of the law of Sinai itself. From the period of the final review of his dispensation by Moses, Deut. v., about 1451 B.C., to that of Amos the herdman of Tekoa, whom some place as late as 787 B.C., and others as early as 810 B.C., that is, for a space of probably 664 years, but



certainly not less than 641 years, there is no reference at all to the sabbath. But does this long silence prove, or even give colour to the presumption, that the law of Sinai was never delivered? And if it cannot do so with respect to that law, it must be with the greatest caution indeed, that we pretend to use it with respect to the original one in Paradise, so plainly announced by Moses in the beginning of Genesis. But, in fact, the silence alleged will be found to be incapable of proof, and we trust to be able to show in the following pages that there are, both in sacred and profane history, some very plain indications of an institution such as that, which Moses has recorded the origin of in the time of man's innocency, while yet he was in the enjoyment of Eden.

The first that we meet with is the expression in Gen. iv. 3, referring to the time when Cain and Abel mutually brought their offerings to the Lord. The very fact of their coming together, and that for the purpose of worship, would of itself lead to the supposition that the time must have been a stated one, and well known and recognized by both; for otherwise

we cannot conceive what could have induced the jealous Cain to unite with the pious Abel in the worship of Jehovah. Had there not been a special day set apart for worship, we should rather have expected Cain to avoid that which Abel chose, from hatred and envy of him. It is however plainly implied, that there was a certain known time at which they both together worshipped God. The expression denoting this is rendered in the text of the Bible, "*In process of time* it came to pass;" but in the margin, "*At the end of days* it came to pass." Now this latter is not only preferable as a construction of the original, but it directly points to that day which was "the end of days," the last that is of the seven, the seventh day, on which God ended the work that he had made, and which he had blessed and sanctified, because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. And thus we have the seventh day plainly indicated to us as that which was commonly used for the public worship of God, and was thereby hallowed and honoured in agreement with its Divine appointment.

Already, too, we find the number seven employed as a number of peculiar force and power, such as we shall have many instances of to produce hereafter. For when Cain trembled for himself, because of the curse pronounced upon him, and feared that every one that found him would slay him, the Lord said to him, "Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." Now, it might be inferred from hence, that the Lord himself originated this use of the number seven; but we incline to a different opinion. It seems more agreeable to God's dealings with man, in which he delights to show his condescension to his creature, in order to win him to himself, that he should adopt and use a phrase well known to his creature, rather than originate one for the occasion; and therefore we infer, that it had an existence and use amongst men previous to its employment by the Lord, and indicates amongst them some institution or custom, whence it must have been derived. And this view of the subject is confirmed by the manner in which Lamech, in his own case, multiplies the expression, when

he says, "If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and seven fold." We conclude, then, that here already there are hints, if not much more than hints, when we consider the extreme paucity of the records themselves, indicating just such an institution as the weekly or seventh-day sabbath was.

But we have still more remarkable evidence than this to produce, connected with the period of the Deluge. Of this occurrence, and of the circumstances connected with it, we have fuller and more detailed, accounts than of any other event of the age. Compared with the rest of the history of this era, the account of the Flood is remarkably precise, accurate, and extended. Here then, if anywhere, we may expect to find traces and indications of the sabbath; and here, as we believe, and trust to be able to prove, they will be found to be very clear and decisive. We will endeavour to exhibit the evidence to be gleaned from the occurrences connected with the Flood, in as concise and plain a manner as possible. The attentive reader of the history will observe, that there are a number of days mentioned with consider-

able care ; and we will, therefore, first explain and connect these in a general view. In doing this it will be our object to show respecting them, first, their several positions throughout the year, as days of the year, numbered in a continuous series, from 1 to 360 for the year ; and then to point out, as may be easily done, the places in the weeks, which such days may severally be conceived to have occupied, upon a supposition which will then be explained. In pursuing this inquiry there is but one particular to advise the reader of, and that is, that in these early periods, the months were always reckoned as containing thirty days, and the year, consequently, as being of 360 days only ; and that these records of the Deluge abundantly prove this. We proceed, then, to arrange the days referred to in the history accordingly.

1. In Gen. vii. 4, 10, 11, will be found two days described ; the one as occurring seven days before the seventeenth day of the second month of the 600th year of Noah's life ; the other, as being the seventeenth day itself. Now the former of these will be found to be

the fortieth day of the year, and the latter the forty-seventh.

2. In Gen. xii. 17, it will be seen that the flood was forty days upon the earth; that is, it rained forty days and forty nights, the last of which period would be the eighty-seventh day of the year.

3. In Gen. vii. 24, and viii. 4, it will be seen that the waters prevailed 150 days; and that on the seventeenth day of the seventh month, the ark rested on Mount Ararat. These two days will be found to coincide, and to be the 197th day of the year.

4. In Gen. viii. 5, will be found a day described as the first day of the tenth month, which is the 271st day of the year.

5. In Gen. viii. 6—12, will be found four days described, the one as being forty days after the mountains were seen, and as that on which the raven was sent out; and the other three as occurring each at intervals of seven days, and these will be the 311th, 318th, 325th, and 332nd days of the year.

6. In Gen. viii. 13, will be found a day, which was the first of the first month of the 601st

year of Noah's life ; and which, carrying on into this year the same series of numbers commenced in the preceding, would be the 361st day.

7. In Gen. viii. 14, is described the seven-and-twentieth day of the second month ; which, according to the same plan, would be the 417th day.

Having thus drawn out these various days, in such a manner as to know their exact relative positions throughout the years, we can now the more easily inquire if they can have any further positions assigned them, so as to determine what days of the week they were. And this we think can be done, very satisfactorily, upon one hypothesis. There are four days specially noted as occurring at regular intervals of seven days ; and this fact alone might lead us to regard them as having something peculiar about them. They are signalised, moreover, as the days on which the raven was sent out once, and the dove three times. Being thus remarkable in every way, both as seventh days and for their events, we conceive it to be in the highest degree probable, and certainly very plausible,

that these were the regularly recognised seventh days of each week, that is, the sabbath days.

But this being admitted, or assumed, all the other days described above, must range in the weeks throughout the year, according to their position in the years relatively to these four, and we shall find them to stand thus:—The 40th, 47th, and 271st, were second days of the week; the 87th, 311th, 318th, 325th, and 332nd, were seventh days of the week; the 197th was the fifth day of the week; and the 361st and 417th were first days of the week.

Now the appropriateness of these days to their several occurrences will, we think, further tend to illustrate and confirm the view we take of them. Thus, for example, the fortieth was the day on which Noah entered the ark, and the forty-seventh was that on which the flood began, and both of these were second days of the week. But since it had been on the second day of the week of creation, that God had divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, so when he reversed his decree for a



time, and the windows of heaven were opened, to pour down upon the earth the waters above the firmament, the second day was most suitable, as reminding the world, that he, who can make by his word, can unmake by the same word ; and that he, who had originally ordered all things good, was now pleased in judgment to undo his own work for a season. So again, the 271st day, being that on which the tops of the mountains were seen, was appropriately a second day, as reminding Noah and his family that God would restore all things as at the first, and that the waters were being gathered once more above the firmament, and stored there to drop fatness upon the earth.

That the eighty-seventh day, being the conclusion of the forty days during which it ceased not to rain night and day, should be the seventh day, was appropriate, as denoting God's resting from his work of judgment, and affording Noah and his family opportunity for praising him for his salvation to them ; while the days on which the raven and the dove were sent forth, seem peculiarly suitable as seventh days—days of holy worship—when the inhabitants of the ark were

seeking to discover the mind of the Lord, and inquiring of his Providence to direct them in their going forth.

That the 361st day, being that on which the ark was uncovered, and the 417th day, being that on which Noah and his family entered once more into possession of the earth, should be first days of the week, seems also appropriate, as denoting the commencement, as it were, of a new creation, since the earth came forth from the flood baptized of the moral defilements that had previously polluted it. Nor should it be forgotten, that, since these were first days, those preceding them—that is, the day before uncovering the ark, and the day before their quitting it—must consequently have been sabbath days, and so have been peculiarly adapted to such remarkable occasions, as preparing for the labours of them by their religious solemnities and devotions.

We think, then, we may say in conclusion, that with respect to these days and incidents in the account of the Flood, they greatly tend to the conviction that such an institution as the sabbath had a primitive origin; they clearly

and certainly prove a division of time into weeks, and that of itself alone is a strong presumption in favour of such a conviction; and they afford unmistakeable traces and indications of that Divine appointment, which Moses declares was made in Paradise itself.

But there is besides, in the patriarchal times, the plainest evidence of a division of time into weeks, or periods of seven days. Thus when Jacob had earned the wife of his choice, but was deceived by Laban substituting her sister instead; and when he remonstrated with Laban on account of the fraud thus practised upon him, the father pleads as his excuse, that it was contrary to their custom to give the younger in marriage before the elder, and promises Jacob that if he will “*fulfil her week,*” he will give him her sister also; and Jacob complied and “fulfilled her week,” Gen. xxix. 27, 28. The word used here in the original for “week” is the very same that occurs in every other place in Scripture, so that there cannot be the slightest doubt about the term; and as we find it employed in later times to signify such a period, so we may be

sure that its sense originally must have been the same ; nor can we have stronger proof than this of a division of time indicating a regular return of the sabbath.

Again ; the period during which Joseph mourned for his father in Canaan, when he brought him there to bury him, was, “ seven days,” Gen. l. 10 ; and this also indicates that in his time the same period was as well recognized, and in use.

Another, and an independent testimony it may be called, is that of Job, who, though living in the patriarchal times, was yet not connected with those from whom the Israelites were descended, and yet amongst him and those who conversed with him, and who were all of different tribes at least, if not of different nations, the same division of time was known ; for his three friends “ sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights,” Job ii. 13.

Now the division of time into weeks of seven days was a system suited neither to their months, which consisted of thirty days, nor to their years, which consisted of 360 days ; and

which could not therefore result from any subdivision of these, nor they from multiplication of seven days. Such a week is in fact altogether unsuited to any natural year like the solar, or to a month such as the lunar, and could not therefore have originated with them. We seek in vain, therefore, amongst natural phenomena for such an origin of it, while the institution of the sabbath, and the reasons of that institution taught by Moses, at once point to one which there is no disputing. Now that this mode of dividing time was well known in the ages referred to, is obvious from the facts mentioned respecting Jacob, who, marrying two sisters, first fulfilled the bridal week to one, and then to the other, Gen. xxix. 21—30. That these were weeks of seven days is certain from the fact, that the same Hebrew word is employed here to mean “week,” that is everywhere else used throughout the Bible, and is further evidenced from what occurs at the bridal feast of Samson, who puts forth a riddle for a reward, “if it can be certainly declared within the seven days of the feast.” Such a division, then, of time we feel justified in presenting, as

a traditional custom, indicative of the primitive institution of the sabbath.

Equally remarkable is the fact, that amongst the very family, and people, we have now been referring to, the number seven was regarded with a mystical and superstitious reverence. Seven ewe lambs did Abraham present to Abimelech, in token of his forgiveness for the injury done to him regarding Beersheba. Seven times did Jacob bow before Esau, in proof of his contrition and submission to him : seven years did he serve Laban for Rachel, and seven more for Leah. Thus the number had, for some reason or other, obtained special favour and regard in the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; and what is more natural than the conclusion, that all this had its origin in that institution which commemorated the course and progress of God's great and gracious work of the creation of the world ?

We may observe further, while upon this particular topic, that in the later periods of the Mosaic dispensation there are multitudes of instances of this use of the number seven, though doubtless it will be said of

them that they may have had their origin in the law of Sinai, and so testify to it, but cannot aid us in our proof that previous to that law there was some more primitive institution of the sabbath. We hesitate not to confess that this is perfectly correct; but *then*, while we do so, we are justly entitled to urge, that if one class of facts subsequent to the law of Sinai point, as we freely concede to it, and claim an origin therefrom, so have we an equal right to demand that a precisely similar class of facts, *previous* to that law, be allowed their due weight and influence, and then of them it must in justice be conceded, that they also point to some institution as having originated them, and thus corroborate our inference, that the sabbath had an origin long antecedent to the giving of the law to Israel.

The institution of the ordinance of the Pass-over furnishes us with another example of the division of time into weeks. Seven days are the people commanded to eat unleavened bread in all their houses, and whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day to the seventh should be cut off. Now it might be pretended,

that this appointment was made in anticipation of what was to be enacted at Sinai, but, besides that such a plan seems inconsistent with God's general dealing with man, it is much more agreeable with the condescension he has always mercifully shown, to understand that this division of time was already well known to the people, for it is spoken of as if it were; and that God therefore graciously adopted it, as the period of the ordinance, because it was one with which the people were well conversant. But this being so, it is therein implied that the people had amongst them the use of this division of time, which, as we have already seen, must have had its origin in that primitive institution, which appointed the seventh day to be observed as a day of holy rest unto the Lord.

To bring down our evidence from this source to the latest period possible, we must refer to the circumstances that occurred in the camp of Israel immediately antecedent to the giving of the law at Sinai, and the relation of which will be found in the sixteenth chapter of the book of Exodus. There can be no doubt whatever that the facts here narrated took place nearly a



fortnight—that is, they commenced more than a fortnight, and had all occurred more than a week—before the giving of the law at Sinai. The people came to the wilderness of Sin, where they occurred, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their coming out of Egypt, and the circumstances referred to then immediately took place. But the law was not given at Sinai until the third day of the third month after the exodus, that is, the eighteenth day after they came to Sin. But, as the facts we are about to refer to took place during the first seven of these days, so they had all occurred at least ten days before the giving of the law. Now this is most important ; for since, as we shall have occasion to see, the circumstances plainly indicate an acquaintance with the sabbath, so is it thereby made evident, that such their acquaintance with it was previous to the giving of the law, independent therefore of it, and plainly indicative of an origin of the sabbath antecedent to the law of Sinai.

Let us now observe the course of events, which are as remarkable as they are instructive.

The people having come to Sin, murmur for want of food, and God in mercy to them thus addresses Moses: "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily." Now what is the law of God here spoken of, respecting which the people were to be tried and proved?—Certainly not that of Sinai, for it is yet eighteen days before the giving of the law there. That it is a law relating to the sabbath is beyond all question; for when some of the people went out upon the seventh day and found no food, the Lord said unto Moses, "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days." But, since it was manifestly a law relating to the sabbath, respecting which the people were to be proved; and since the law of Sinai had not yet been given, there-

fore the law referred to must have been the primitive one given in Paradise ; and this is fully confirmed by the words of Moses to the people, when the rulers of the congregation came to announce to him the fact, that on the sixth day every man had gathered twice as much as on each of the preceding five days. “ This,” said he, “ is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord.”

In fact, throughout the whole of this narrative there were evidently in the mind of the writer two facts assumed, without regard to which the account is unintelligible. The first is, that the people had some knowledge, however vague and obscure, of the law by which they were to be proved, and the purport of which was now to be indicated to, and revived in them by the deposit of manna during six days, and not on the seventh ; the second is, that already, and that previously to the promulgation of the law at Sinai, there existed a law of God relative to the sabbath, the observance of which the people were expected to understand and keep. And both these as-

sumptions plainly evidence an original of the sabbath as a Divine ordinance of the Lord previous to the period referred to, and must therefore point back to that when it was first commanded at the Creation.

The sending of manna, which was to be daily and continually supplied to the people, was the first occasion, since the commencement of the world, of God continuously *working* in behalf of his people, and this consequently was a very suitable one for exhibiting his own consistency with regard to his own principles. If from the foundation of the world his principle was six days' labour and one of rest, so now, when he was about to work for the people and supply them with daily food, we might be sure that God would act in strict agreement with his primitive principle, and provide manna during six days and rest on the seventh. Accordingly this is exactly what occurs,—and although for five days the people all gather an equal quantity, so that he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack ; and although when they attempted to save some until the morrow it bred worms

and stank: yet on the sixth day every man, to his own amazement, had gathered double, and, as was subsequently proved on the seventh day, it stank not. But when they came to inquire concerning this of Moses, he had his answer from God, “ This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up until the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord: to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two

days ; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day," Exod. xvi. 23—30.

Here, then, we have the sabbath existing as an institution previous to the giving of the fourth commandment, and confirmed as an ordinance by a continuing series of miracles. Thus, on every sixth day a double quantity of manna is supplied to the people, and though the excess would not keep upon any other day of the week, it remains fresh and good, neither breeding worms nor stinking, on the seventh day ; while upon that day none falls, and God rests from his labour of providing for their sustenance thereon. All these special miracles are wrought of God in observance of the sabbath, all occur previous to the law being given on Mount Sinai, and all, therefore, prove a previous origin and existence of this holy and blessed institution. We do not argue from this, as some have done, a previous observance of the sabbath amongst the people of Israel, for we do not think that this is to be inferred. But what we contend for is this ; that on this the

first occasion of God's continuously working in behalf of man since the Creation, he acts upon the same principle that he did in the beginning; for he works six days and rests the seventh, telling the people, through Moses, that it "is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord;" and this being done previous to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, plainly implies a previous origin and existence of the institution, that is, the primitive origin and existence that it had in Paradise.

And agreeable to this previous existence of it are the words of the Most High, propounding the law for its observance, and which are remarkably peculiar; for while all the other commandments commence with an express and decisive form of command, this speaks of the sabbath as something already known, to be remembered as already known, and to be kept in remembrance for the future as an ordinance of God. For all this seems to be implied in the words, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." And this sense and understanding of it are much confirmed by the manner in which the circumstance is referred to in the

book of Nehemiah ; for the Levites, in their address to God, say, “ Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments : and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath,” Neh. ix. 13, 14,—for these words, “ madest known thy holy sabbath,” imply the revelation of an ordinance already instituted, rather than one then first appointed.

Now it may be said of all this evidence, that it does not fully and undoubtedly prove the sabbath to have been observed and kept by the people in those early times. And this we freely grant, not desiring to push the inferences to be gathered from the facts one degree farther than the facts themselves will warrant. But granting this, and even for the sake of argument, dropping the question of observance altogether, let us consider whether there is not here sufficient testimony of such an early institution of the sabbath, as to leave it beyond a doubt, that it was first appointed in Paradise, as the account of Moses, according to the plain and simple understanding of it, relates. Let it,



then, now be remembered, that we are not so much concerned to prove its observance, as its primitive institution, and the consequent obligation upon all men to keep it, because it was “made for man,” that is, for the whole race of man, and not, as some would have us believe, for the one nation of Israel alone. Now the early history of the world would lead us to expect that the sabbath was then neglected, for where sin so abounded as to call forth the judgment of the Deluge, the sabbath itself must have been long disregarded, before sin could have gained such an ascendancy over man. The same state of things followed speedily after the Deluge, and prevailed all through the patriarchal times, not excepting even the family of Abraham, for they were early tainted with idolatry, as recorded by Joshua, and must consequently have lost this ordinance of the God they had forsaken. To expect, then, any direct mention of an institution which the condition of the world testified to the utter neglect of, and to argue that, because there is no direct mention of it under circumstances where such mention is impro-

bable, not to say impossible, therefore it could never have been instituted in these early times—seem to be assertions equally unreasonable and unjust. Idolatry abounded in the kingdom of Israel, so that the true God, who had revealed himself to them, was entirely forgotten and neglected. But this does not prove that he had never revealed himself. Just so the non-observance of the sabbath, because of the abounding iniquity of mankind, and all silence in consequence respecting it, do not prove that it was never instituted. The original principle of marriage was so disregarded, that Abraham took a concubine besides his wife, and Jacob had two wives and two concubines; but these facts cannot disprove what our Saviour himself declared was the principle of marriage from the beginning. In a word, the neglect or disuse of an ordinance or law is no proof whatever of its not having been instituted, and consequently no neglect of the sabbath, the observance and memory of which were committed to man's care, can prove that it had not been instituted.

But now, upon the supposition, we may say the belief, that it had been instituted at the time of the Creation, as Moses' history evidently implies, and further, upon a review of the condition of mankind all through the early periods of the world's history showing the depravity of mankind and the neglect of the sabbath, first as a cause, and then as a consequence, of that depravity—what, upon these considerations, should we expect to find in the history? Why, just such references to circumstances, and occurrences, as we may properly suppose would grow out of an institution like this, and which the history does, in fact, contain. Such, for example, are the allusions to certain particular days of every seven all through the period of the Deluge, the division of time into weeks as known and used in Laban's family, the mourning for seven days by Joseph, and other mystical, or, it may be, even in some cases superstitious uses of the number seven, which are not unfrequently met with. Now all this we say is so natural, as arising out of the institution that Moses relates the origin of, as mate-

rially to confirm and establish the belief of that account of it as true, and to convince us that, from the very first, and even in the time of man's innocency in Paradise, "the sabbath was made for man."

## CHAPTER III.

### LAW OF THE DECALOGUE RESPECTING THE SABBATH, AND ITS PRINCIPLE.

“ The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just,  
and good.”—Rom. vii. 12.

NEVER has there been a law commented on, and interpreted according to such strange and contradictory notions, as that respecting the sabbath promulgated on Mount Sinai. Man is by nature so averse to holiness, which is the essential characteristic and purport of the sabbath, that it is not so much to be wondered at, as it is to be deplored, that he has felt the nature of the sabbath uncongenial to his own nature, has struggled against the enjoyment of it, because, until converted, he knows not its blessing and delight, and has striven to set himself free from the influence of a statute which is irksome to his mind, because he comprehends not its nature. Were man still innocent,

righteous, and holy, as Adam was in Paradise, he would, like him, adopt and exercise the primitive principle of the sabbath, keeping holy one day in every seven, with a glad and willing heart; but it is because he is a sinner, and therefore unholy, and incapable of understanding, appreciating, and enjoying the holiness of the day, that he resists the ordinance, and rejects its blessedness. And since it is the nature of sin to blind and darken the understanding, as seen in the case of the idolater described by Isaiah of old, who says of him, that “a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?” just so is it with respect to the sabbath. It is a spiritual thing, which can only be spiritually discerned; and sin so darkens the mind respecting it, that men, yielding to their natural dislike of its holiness, suffer themselves to be betrayed into all kinds of foolish and frivolous pretences, dignified by the name of reasons, for ridding themselves of it.

Such an one is that which affirms that the law of the sabbath contained in the decalogue, and delivered on Sinai by the voice of God

himself, is only a part of the ritual and ceremonial law of Moses, and consequently was abrogated when that law was fulfilled by Christ. Never was there a pretence so unreasonable as this, for to what does it amount?—Just to this: that one law, which is part and parcel of a certain Divinely-appointed moral code, does not belong to it—is not to be understood as the rest of the code is—is to be of less permanence and authority, and, though ordained by God, may be repealed by man. Why should this, which belongs to the Divine moral code of Sinai, be lowered at man's bidding from its exalted station, and placed amongst mere ritual and ceremonial laws?—How can we shift a law of this kind from one code to another? Should we do so with any of man's framing? Should we thus shift an ecclesiastical canon from its own code to a civil or criminal one, and attempt to deal with an ecclesiastical offender by civil action or criminal process? Such a notion would be at once discarded as preposterous and absurd in the extreme, and no civil or criminal court would listen for a moment to a charge purely ecclesiastical, but would dismiss it to its

own jurisdiction. And yet this reasonable mode of procedure in the case of human laws, is entirely disregarded in respect of this Divine one ; and men, with the greatest readiness, and with a show of wisdom which all the worldly-minded hail and applaud to the very echo, pronounce upon the fourth commandment, that it is no part of the moral law, displace it from its righteous position, cast it amongst the abrogated ritual and ceremonial laws, and quietly rid themselves of a law which is holy, just, and good, because they comprehend not its beauty, nor value its privileges and blessings.

We assert, then, in behalf of this neglected and ill-used law, in behalf of His honour who gave it unto man, in behalf of man whose privilege and grace it is, that it is as much an integral and imperishable portion of the decalogue, as all the other nine are ; and that, however men may dare, and attempt to degrade it, it stands, like all the rest, immutable and inalienable. Not only is it a moral law, but it renders complete the first table of that law, which is expressly appropriated to instruction respecting the honour and glory of Him who is a jea-



lous God, and will not yield any portion of that which is righteously his due. While the first commandment teaches the knowledge of God, and reveals Him to the house of Israel as specially their God, because he had “brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage,” and so introduces God to them, at the beginning of the code, as their Saviour and Redeemer, the fourth commandment reveals Him as not only the God of Israel, but as the God of all the earth, and carries the people to a higher and nobler conception of Him, as the Creator of the world and all that is therein. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of the house of Israel, was not the God of that one nation only, but of every people, nation, and language ; so that in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him, who hath made all men of one blood to dwell together upon the face of the whole earth. But, in the midst of the heathen and idolatrous nations that abounded in the earth, the special glory of Israel it was to know the Maker of the universe, and to know him as the God of

Israel ; and this knowledge was revealed in the fourth commandment, and gives to the whole code that true impress of divinity, which without it would be wanting, for this exhibits the God of Israel as not one amongst the gods of the nations, nor yet the chiefest of them, but as God alone, “for in six days He made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is.” How vain, then, to pretend that a law of such an import was a ritual or ceremonial one, to be abrogated and abolished, and to deny it to be what it really is—a moral and religious one, of universal and perpetual obligation.

But another device, no less extravagant and absurd than the preceding, has been imagined, for getting rid of the force, efficacy, and excellency of this Divine and holy commandment. It is pretended respecting it, that its main design was the relief of man from bodily labour, and that those who would make it a day of religion, and not of pleasure and amusement, divert it from its original purpose, and turn that which was mercifully intended of God for the refreshment of man from his earthly toils, into a day of gloom and moodiness, a puritani-

cal ordinance as they term it, irksome by its restrictions rather than grateful by its liberty. Plausible as such a plea is to the irreligious and worldly-minded, and frequently as it is made use of by those who pretend to be the friends of the people, it is founded upon entire forgetfulness of the original circumstances under which the principle of the sabbath was first taught. That it is, indeed, a day of rest to man, and a blessed occasion of refreshment to his wearied body, is unquestionable ; and that it is, therefore, in this respect, an additional mercy to him in his fallen state, ought never to be forgotten or overlooked ; but then, it should also be remembered that the sabbath existed in the time of man's innocency ; before he came under the influence of the judgment, "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread ;" and, consequently, before there was that need for the rest of his toil-worn body which sin and its effects have caused him to know. For, as has been very pertinently remarked by Lord Bacon, among the first of his Divine proofs of the excellence of learning, in his treatise on "The Advancement of Learning"—"After the creation was finished,

it is set down unto us, that man was placed in the garden to work therein, which work, so appointed to him, could be no other than work of contemplation ; that is, when the end of the work is but for exercise and experiment, not for necessity ; for there being then no reluctance of the creature, nor sweat of the brow, man's employment must of consequence have been matter of delight in the experiment, and not matter of labour for use." And this fact alone ought, if wisely considered, to arouse these contemners of this Divine ordinance to inquire more carefully into its origin and design.

Now, in order to do this properly, we only make this reasonable demand, that this law shall be construed and applied upon the same rational principles that human laws are. All such laws may be regarded as consisting of two parts : the *preamble*, which sets forth the *object* aimed at by any particular statute, and the several *provisions* for ensuring, as far as it can be ensured, the accomplishment of the object. Thus, to adopt a most pertinent illustration, the statute, 1 Car. i. cap. 1, recites in its preamble : " Forasmuch as there is nothing more

acceptable to God than the true and sincere service and worship of Him according to His holy will; and that the holy keeping of the Lord's day is a principal part of the true service of God, which in very many places of this realm hath been and now is profaned and neglected by a disorderly sort of people," &c.; and after having thus explained its object, namely, to ensure "the holy keeping of the Lord's day," it proceeds to enact, that various things that then interfered with it should be condemned and punished, with a view to their entire prohibition. Now, who that reads this law would be so unwise as to say—or what judge from the bench would declare respecting it, that the only object of it is to put an end to bull-baiting and other sports on the sabbath; and would not rather affirm, that, in forbidding these things, it did so only as a means to an end, that end being the main object of the law, "the holy keeping of the Lord's day?" For since bull-baiting and other sports then frustrated the design of the sabbath, just as labour if persisted in also would, so these sports were forbidden, not as the end and object of the

statute, but simply as a means to accomplish its end and object; that so the sabbath, which in those times had been abused, might be relieved from these great abuses—might be cleared of all hindrances to its great design; and being so cleared, might be employed for its own good, and gracious, and merciful purpose, as originally ordained and given by God.

Now, the great moral statute existing in the fourth commandment is founded on exactly the same plan as this statute of the realm of England. The two are as strictly parallel and analogous as it is possible for any two laws to be. They both aim at the same object, and in the same way. The fourth commandment, like the statute, has its *preamble*, setting forth its object and design, “Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy;” and then, exactly like the statute again, it proceeds to forbid certain things, the doing of which would altogether hinder and frustrate its one main design and purport; and since our necessities demanding our labour would most obviously occasion the sabbath to be profaned, therefore even our labour—that which is necessary to our very

existence; for “he that will not labour, neither shall he eat,” is forbidden to us; in order to teach us, that if that which is necessary must yield place to the holiness of this day, much more must that which is unnecessary—our amusement and our pleasure. And yet obvious and rational as this interpretation is, men misapply the commandment, and say labour is forbidden and may not be done, but pleasure, however toilsome, is quite admissible, for this is evidently the purpose of the day, to release men from labour, to give them a holiday, and thereby to afford them opportunity for worldly pleasure and enjoyment.

Now the true understanding of the law is this: its design was to have one day in every seven observed as holy, so that all done thereon should be holiness to the Lord, and that those who kept it holy might themselves increase the more in holiness, and grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But since works of labour would be a most specious and fruitful pretence for breaking the law and disregarding its design, therefore all labour was forbidden thereon. The

grand principle of the law, then, is not cessation from labour, for that is but a subsidiary provision; neither yet is it only rest from labour, for that, though blessed, is again only subsidiary; but it is this, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." Nothing less than the keeping it holy will answer the requirements of the law: nothing less than the keeping it holy will be agreeable to God; nothing less than the keeping it holy will be a loyal and dutiful obedience unto God. Refraining from labour is well, as refreshing to the body and clearing the day which God hath ordained and sanctified. Refraining from pleasure is well, as reverencing and not abusing God's ordinance; but these, after all, are only *negative*: the *positive* grace and excellency in fulfilling the commandment is, "THE KEEPING HOLY THE SABBATH DAY."

It may be questioned by some, if this were really so, how it is that the main stress is laid upon cessation from labour, and the more important part of the commandment is made so much less of? We answer to this; first, that it is a mistake to suppose it is made less of, for



it is placed prominently forward in the commandment; but it will be found to be the nature of all similar laws, that the preamble, though expressing their main design, is necessarily short, while long provisions are needed to ensure the accomplishment of it. And this is the consequence of man's cunning and sinful craftiness, which will always devise a hundred ways of escaping the good intended him, if not carefully shut up by enactments to the necessity of doing it. But, secondly, the very same remark applies to the statute of Charles I., which has been already referred to. The object of that law will be found in a few words in its preamble, while there are long provisions for securing its object; and more than that, it became necessary afterwards to enact a second statute to the same effect, 3 Car. I. cap. 1; and even a third, 29 Car. II. cap. 7. And the reason of all this has been well explained in reference to a somewhat similar subject by Dr. Paley, who explains why there are no laws compelling parents and children mutually to love one another. He remarks: "The law never speaks but to command, nor commands but where it can

enforce obedience ;” and since it cannot compel parents and children to love one another, it does not command them to do so. What it can compel, that they mutually provide for one another when able, it does command. Just so respecting the Lord’s day. The law commands and enforces, in a variety of ways, cessation of labour, and refraining from amusements ; but it cannot compel a holy observance of it, though it can restrain an unholy one. And so of the fourth commandment ; it strictly forbids labour ; but while it exhorts and enjoins the keeping holy the sabbath day, it does not enforce and compel it, for the service of God is perfect freedom, and the Lord loveth a cheerful giver.

The grand and main purport, then, of the law of the sabbath is, the keeping the day holy, and as the result of that the cultivation of holiness amongst those who obey and observe it. Holiness is its design, holiness its observance, and holiness its effect. And what is holiness ? It is the essential fitness for living with God and enjoying heaven. “ Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,” is the faithful assurance of Scripture ; and the great end

and object of this day is the edification and growth of man in holiness. And yet, for all this it is said, that this commandment is no part of the moral law, and consequently was abrogated with the other ritual and ceremonial laws; and this specious pretext for the neglect of it is repeated by commentators apparently wise and grave, and is approved of as if it were a settled and undeniable point. Now we ask with all confidence, what is there ceremonial or ritual in the fourth commandment? We ask with equal confidence what is there ceremonial or ritual in the statutes of our realm that have been cited above? Just as much in the one as in the other, and that is just nothing at all, either ritual or ceremonial. We defy any one to point out in the sabbatical commandment anything whatever peculiar to the Mosaic dispensation. Not even the ground on which the sabbath is ordained is peculiar, for that is the creation of the world, which is common to every race of man, and to all dispensations of grace. We urge this point the stronger, and with the more confidence, because so much has been made of the pretence we are

combating, and so many, in various ways, have upheld it, without intending to damage the principle of the sabbath, until at length it has come to be regarded as something undeniably proved and settled. Now to all such we put the same question. Produce anything that you can in the law of the sabbath, either ceremonial or ritual—show in any one particular that its principles are so peculiar and essential to the Mosaic dispensation, as that it must have terminated with it, and we will be prepared to entertain the inquiry as to whether it is part or not of the imperishable laws of the decalogue ; but until then we shall contend, and maintain as incontrovertible, that it is as much and as integral a portion of the moral law, as any one of the six commandments that follow it, and which no one dreams of pretending to have been abrogated, however much they may, some of them, particularly the seventh, be disregarded.

For if, indeed, the fourth commandment be in any sense not a moral one, it can be only in that sense which exalts it above moral laws, and makes it a spiritual one. Those that are

ordinarily allowed to be, and are cherished as moral laws, that is, the six of the second table, have respect after all only to our duty to man, and must eventually perish with the using; for the fashion of this world passeth away, and we shall be adapted hereafter to a spiritual and holy life. But this of the sabbath hath respect to our duty to God, whose day it is, and whom therefore we are bound to honour by the observance of it; and the effect of this day is not a fashion that can change, is not an act that can perish with the using, or change with our change of state through death to immortality, but holiness, the essential principle of the day, must ascend with us to the presence of our God; holiness must accompany us, as our qualification for communion with him; and holiness, the proper work of the sabbath, that only work that profanes it not;—holiness will survive and endure through eternity, when all the requirements of the moral law will have passed into perpetual desuetude.

There is yet one particular in which this law differs from all ordinary ones, and which tends materially to prove its endurance and per-

petuity, and that is its concluding and commemorative clause. It is, indeed, seldom, if ever, that such a clause is found amongst human statutes, and the law and its observance made the means of recording, as it were, and keeping in remembrance, such a great and glorious truth as this contains. It does therefore strongly tend to prove and establish the continuance of the law. The fact thus ordained to be kept in remembrance is all-important to man. The primary idea of God, that the human mind is susceptible of, is that of our Creator. "He that made all things is God," is the first axiom in the knowledge of God. Would you teach a child an idea of God, you render him sensible that "one is his Maker, even God." Would you instil into any, young or old, a notion of the almighty power and wisdom of God, you do so by directing their minds to the contemplation of his works, and teaching them to recognize in the wonders of creation the master mind that contrived, and the hand that made them all. And this is the very design of the commemorative clause in this commandment. It is to keep alive the

knowledge of the truth, that “in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is.” Had this law been, as is pretended, so peculiar to the Mosaic dispensation as to have been part of the ceremonial and ritual law, here would have been the clause in which its peculiarity must have been found; here would have been the place for such a declaration as the first commandment contains, “I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage;” here we should have found reference to the peculiarities of the Mosaic dispensation, and not to a fact which belongs to all mankind and to all dispensations alike. But a law, that contains in it such a clause as this, that is founded upon this fact, the remembrance of which it is designed to commemorate, and which is one that must never be forgotten, either in this life or that to come;—such a law so founded, must have been intended to be, and must be preserved as perpetual, in all its vital and essential principles.

And what are these principles?—Even those that were spoken from the beginning, and are

never to be disregarded or overlaid. It is a strange thing, indeed, that in the eighteenth century of the Christian era, we should be told to return to "the oldness of the letter," and not to trust to and rejoice in "the newness of the spirit." The oldness of the letter would have us take the law literally; would have us believe that one special day of the week, the seventh, is involved in the faithful observance of the sabbath; would have us content ourselves with regarding cessation from labour as the design of the commandment, instead of being merely the means to the great end and object of it—sanctifying the day. And thus it is that a professed adherence to the letter robs this law of its spirit and grace. The newness of the spirit, on the contrary, teaches us to regard and respect the spirit of the commandment as more essential than the letter. This spirit is identical with that which was spoken in the beginning, and is founded on the same wondrous facts, that in six days God made all things, and both rested on the seventh, and blessed and sanctified it. The very essence of this spirit is the sanctification of one day in every seven to the



glory and honour of God, and the recognition thereby of his mercy and goodness as the Creator, Provider, Saviour, and Sanctifier of man.

The law of the sabbath is not a bond of restraint, but a charter of liberty to every soul of man, to Greek and Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, to high and low, to rich and poor, to one with another. It is sanctified of God, separated unto holiness, and blessed by His hallowing Spirit; and we know that “the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,” 2 Cor. iii. 17. “Whoso looketh into this perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed,” Jam. i. 25. It ensures to every man, at the command of God, liberty of action and of mind, freedom of body and soul, exemption from toil and care, that all may sanctify the day, and themselves be sanctified thereby. This is its grant of liberty, to which even the bondsman and the slave is entitled, and which none can rob him of without committing the highest offence

and indignity against God. It is a great and noble bill of rights, graciously conferred by God's free favour and love upon all men; and let all beware how they despise his goodness, since they will thereby most assuredly rebel against Him.

## CHAPTER IV.

### HISTORY OF THE SABBATH DURING THE PERIOD OF THE MOSAIC DISPENSATION.

“ Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep : for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations ; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.”—Exod. xxxi. 13.

It has been already remarked in a previous chapter, that from the time of Moses, that is, from the period of the final review of his dispensation, Deut. v., about the year 1451 B.C., to that of Amos the herdman of Tekoa, whom some place as late as 787 B.C., and others as early as 810 B.C. ; that is, for a space of probably 664 years, but certainly not less than 641 years, there is no reference at all to the sabbath, in the historical or other books of Scripture. The laws of the Mosaic economy were completed by the great lawgiver himself, under the immediate direction and inspiration of God, and he so settled and confirmed them

by all necessary additions during his life, that there needed none subsequently. Such as occasion rendered requisite, to explain or enforce what had already been enacted, were given from the same source and by the same authority, that the originals of them were, and just as we find explanatory additions made to others, as to the sixth respecting the distinctions between manslaughter and murder, and to the eighth respecting the degrees of turpitude, between common theft, burglary, and the like ; so also as regarded the fourth commandment, additional enactments, such as would now be called declaratory statutes, were made respecting it, explaining both its design and object, and enforcing both by precept and example the law, which God with his own voice had promulgated, and with his own finger had inscribed, for man's edification, comfort, and blessing.

The design and object of the sabbath are very pertinently and plainly taught. They were, rest for the body, and sanctification for the soul of man. The rest and refreshment of the sabbath are distinctly set forth in these

words : “ Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest : that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed,” Exod. xxiii. 12. And lest any pretence or excuse should arise for infringing this rest of the sabbath, as some might at times be desirous of alleging, the most plausible of such pretexts was forbidden, and consequently all others ; for we read, “ Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest : in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest,” Exod. xxxiv. 21. Now in earing time and harvest the excuse of *urgent necessity* for breaking the sabbath might arise, or be alleged ; but since these very times were especially named, and the pretences originating in them disallowed, therefore it is obvious that other similar excuses were equally forbidden, and a faithful observance of the seventh day as a sabbath of rest was enjoined. But in these enactments let it be observed, that no penalty whatever is attached to them. They enjoin and prescribe rest, but they do not affix any punishment to the neglect of that rest. It is when the sabbath is viewed in

another light, when it is regarded not merely as a day of rest, but as “holiness unto the Lord,” and when the breaking its rest is shown to be a defiling of its holiness, and consequently a despising of the Lord that sanctified it, that the heavy penalty of death is denounced against the sabbath-breaker. This will at once be observed to be so in both the passages that contain the penalty of death, that is, in Exodus xxxi. 12—17, and xxxv. 2, 3. In both these places the sabbath is expressly spoken of as “holiness unto the Lord;” its rest is declared to be with this object, and in the former of them an entirely new element was introduced into the institution, namely, that it was to be a sign between God and his people throughout their generations, “That,” says he, “ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.” Now this view of the institution is most important; for it does, we submit with much confidence, absolutely and entirely get rid of the notion commonly abroad, that the Jewish sabbath was a mere ritual observance, the very design and essence of which was only rest, abstinence from labour, and that this is no

longer incumbent upon us, who are released from the law of Moses, and its burthensome services, and especially from the bondage of the law in regard to the sabbath, which admits of no exertion or labour, whether for work or for pleasure. The Jewish sabbath was designed for rest unquestionably, but rest was by no means its chief design. That which was to be regarded as "holiness unto the Lord;" which was not to be defiled by any work, not even by one so apparently needful as the kindling a fire thereon; which was to be a memorial to the people that the Lord was their sanctification; which was to be a sign between the people and God; and which was protected by the same penalty that was denounced against idolaters, blasphemers, witches, wizards, and the like; such an institution as this must have been designed, as in effect it was, for a far higher and nobler end than the mere refreshment and rest of the body. He who revered it as "holiness unto the Lord," and who, by keeping it holy, learned to look upon the Lord as his sanctifier, such an one must himself, by such exercises, have been growing in holiness, yea,

“perfecting holiness in the fear of God,” 2 Cor. vii. 1. And thus the sabbath, by being sanctified and hallowed of man, was applied to its own great original and primitive design—the sanctification of man, and as a sign between him and his Maker, became a merciful and efficient means of recovering man from his debased condition under sin, of reviving in him thoughts of God and of heaven, and of renewing in its degree that blessed communion and intercourse which had existed between God and Adam in Paradise.

One instance only is recorded, during the sojourning of the children of Israel in the wilderness, of a sabbath breaker being put to death. A man was found gathering sticks on the sabbath, with what intent does not appear, but it may be presumed for the purpose of kindling a fire. Now this was especially forbidden in Exod. xxxv. 1—3, where the penalty of death was enjoined. Yet Moses and Aaron seem to have had doubts as to the punishment due to this offence. It may have appeared to them too small an offence; or since the man was only gathering sticks, and had not kindled



a fire, they may have judged the sin incomplete, and the capital punishment not merited. But, however this might be, they were unwilling to decide the matter themselves, and they waited therefore to receive from God the declaration of his will concerning the man. "And the Lord said unto Moses, the man shall surely be put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp." This resolution of the matter, so entirely in accordance with the law previously referred to, could not fail to have its influence on the nation at large, and teach them "to remember and do all his commandments, and to be holy unto their God," Numb. xv. 40.

But although no additions were, or could be, introduced into the law of the sabbath after the time of Moses, efforts were occasionally made by some of the prophets and holy men, who from time to time had influence with the people, to recall them to a sense of their duty to God, to the day, and to themselves. Thus we read of Amos rebuking them, because they found the sabbath a weariness, saying, "When will the sabbath be gone, that we may set forth

wheat;" viii. 5, and charging them at the same time with the necessary consequences of thus despising the sabbath,—the growth and increase of oppression and wrong amongst them. The prophet Isaiah, again, as became his evangelical spirit, strove to raise the dignity and worth of the day, and to elevate it in the affections and interest of the nation. Accordingly he proclaims at one time, "Blessed is the man that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it. Every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant, even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer," lxvi. 2, 6. At another time he declares, "If thou turn away thy feet from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," lviii. 13, 14.

Subsequent to the time of Isaiah, and after the captivity in Babylon, Nehemiah was, under God, the great instrument for restoring the sabbath to its honour, and even to the privileges and graces of it. In his hymn of praise to God, wherein he commemorates the mercies vouchsafed to the nation, he enumerates amongst these, “the sabbath having been made known to them,” ix. 14; and in agreement with this profession, he bound the people “by a curse and an oath, to walk in God’s law; and if the people of the land brought ware or victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that they would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day,” x. 29—31. Nor did he hesitate with all his authority to enforce the agreement that had been so solemnly entered into, as he thus relates: “In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought

fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. And it came to pass that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath. And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concern-

ing this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy." Neh. xiii. 15—22.

As the Jews had heretofore been shamefully neglectful of the sabbath, and as the national sin of sabbath-breaking had been one of the reasons of their being subjected to the seventy years' captivity, as recorded in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21, so after their return from Babylon they entered upon such a strict observance of it, that they fell into the opposite error, of conceiving themselves to be so tied and bound by the sabbatical law, that they were not at liberty to do the strongest act of necessity, that of self-preservation, that can befall man. Accordingly, in the times of persecution and of war, when, by ordinary exertions on the sabbath, many might have saved themselves from certain destruction, they refused to do so, conceiving that they were bound rather to perish miserably than to break the laws. Thus, in the time of Antiochus, no less than a thousand persons, men, women, and children, who had hid themselves in a cave, were cruelly put to death, advantage being taken of their known resolution respecting the sabbath, their steadfastness to which

was the occasion of their destruction. In consequence of this, Mattathias and his followers obtained a law, that they might defend themselves on the sabbath. But in the time of Pompey this also was turned against them; for though they would defend themselves if attacked, they would not obstruct the enemy in the prosecution of his works against them, and thus the enemy could in safety carry on his preparations on the sabbath day without fear of injury or molestation.—*Prideaux's Connection*, vol. ii. pp. 170, 411.

The straitness and severity of observance which the Jewish nation had thus learned to practise under the influence of persecution and war, eventually grew into a rigid and superstitious formality, which allowed no relaxation, and became the occasion of captiousness and strife. Thus, when our Lord had healed the man with the withered hand in the synagogue on the sabbath day, he knew that his act of mercy was an offence to their minds, and he reasoned with them to show them that "it is lawful to do well on the sabbath day," Matt. xii. 12. So again, when he loosed of her in-

firmity the woman who had been bowed together eighteen years, and did so in the synagogue on the sabbath, the ruler objected, "There are six days in which men ought to work: in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day." But our Lord rebuked him as an hypocrite, and exposed the folly of his objection. The same thing occurred when the dropsical and the paralytic were healed. And at length exception was taken by the people to the simple act of our Lord's disciples, in plucking, rubbing, and eating a few ears of corn in the fields as they passed along. Our Saviour, in defending them, showed that the priests in the temple, by the performance of acts of worship laboured, and so profaned the sabbath, but were blameless; and that David, in taking the shewbread, was justified by his necessity. From whence he infers, that the sabbath, being made for man, may yield occasionally to man's necessities, and concludes with the important claim for himself, and declaration of his own right, that "the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day."

## CHAPTER V.

TEACHING OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES RELATIVE TO  
THE SABBATH, AND SUBSTITUTION OF THE FIRST DAY  
FOR THE SEVENTH.

“The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.”—Mark ii. 28.

IT was an essential principle of the gospel dispensation, that God was thenceforth to be worshipped and honoured, not merely as the Original Creator of man, but as his New Creator, “for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto new works.” The proper and full divinity of the Son, “equal to the Father as touching his Godhead,” was to be so manifested, that “the Son of man should be glorified, and God glorified in him.” “For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth; and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For, as the Father raiseth up the dead,



and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: THAT ALL MEN SHOULD HONOUR THE SON, EVEN AS THEY HONOUR THE FATHER," John v. 20—23. Now, when we find the gospel exhibiting to us such a principle as this, and when moreover we find it recorded by three evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, that Jesus declared of himself, "the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath," when we find him, everywhere throughout the new dispensation, manifesting forth his glory, and shining as the sun, and centre, and chief excellency of that wondrous scheme of salvation, whereby "he is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;" what marvel is it further to find, that the observance of the sabbath principle, which had originated in Paradise, and been ratified at Sinai, should be rendered accordant with, and subservient to, the spiritual graces of the gospel; and since "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath," that it should now be adapted to the new state of

things that had begun in the earth, and be employed to commemorate the great first act of the new creation, the rising again from the dead of Him who, having power to lay down his life, yielded up the ghost on the cross for man's redemption; and, having power to take it up again, rose from the dead for man's justification.

The change of the day seems most natural and appropriate to that new state of things, in which all honour was to be so rendered to Jesus, that he declared, "He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." There was no variation of principle, no shadow of turning, in this; but that which had been from the beginning continued still immutable. One day in every seven was still to be observed as holy unto the Lord. Six days' labour, and one of rest, to be sanctified and honoured as the sabbath, was the same constant and stedfast principle. The mere day might be changed, the identical round of hours might not be preserved, but the principle in spirit and in truth was unmutilated. The old sabbath, so to speak, was entombed

with Christ in the sepulchre, but the new one rose again with him from the grave, and opened to the world a more jubilant hope, inasmuch as it was thenceforth to be the testimony of the new creation in Christ Jesus, rather than of the old creation of man in the flesh; and was, moreover, to be a sign the most appropriate that "all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."

We shall find these views very materially confirmed and established, if we take a survey of the manner in which our Lord dealt with the sabbath, and observe how he gradually developed and exercised his divine authority respecting it. The mission with which he was charged was a renovating, quickening, and sanctifying one. He "came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them," and thereby to render them more edifying and efficacious, than in the hands of the stiffnecked and uncircumcised house of Israel they had hitherto been. Few things will better show the renewing and restoring influence of his work upon earth than his dealing with the sabbath. It had been distorted by the Jews, as

observed in the last chapter, into a wearisome and formal day of service, affording occasion for the display of pharisaical captiousness, rather than "godly edifying which is in faith." To break through this perversion of so holy and sanctifying a blessing as the sabbath, and to restore it to its original design when made for man, as a privilege and grace, not as a burden and a toil, was the object at which our Saviour steadily aimed, and in order to accomplish which he claimed his own divine authority respecting it.

The first occasion on which we read of his doing any act that was opposed to the Jewish errors respecting the sabbath, is that recorded by St. Mark, i. 21—27, when, at Capernaum, on a sabbath, he cast out an unclean spirit in the synagogue. The assembled congregation was amazed at his authority, and ventured not to dispute it. Not so, however, on the next occasion, which is related by St. John, v. 1—18. Jesus not only healed the impotent man, but said unto him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." But while the Jews did not yet venture to find fault with the miracle he had done, they

did with the man who had been healed, for carrying his bed on the sabbath day. He pleaded, indeed, and that justly, the authority of Him who had healed him; but the Jews denounced Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. He met and refuted them, however, by an argument so bold, and yet so incontrovertible, that their very enmity was appalled, though in no degree allayed. He “answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”

The intimation conveyed in this assertion was too plain to be misunderstood, and they in their anger “sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.” In thus announcing his equality with the Father, he thereby claims for himself the authority respecting the sabbath which the Father who instituted it had, and prepares the way for the declaration of that truth which the next occasion afforded him an opportunity of. This was the occurrence related by St. Matthew, xii. 1—8; St. Mark, ii. 23—27; and St. Luke, vi. 1—5. His dis-

ciples passing through the corn-fields plucked some ears of corn, rubbed them in their hands, and ate them. Here, apparently, was an absolute infringement of the law of the sabbath. Healing was an act of mercy, and justifiable, as well by their own practice of leading a beast to water, or saving it from destruction, as by the undeniable principle, "it is lawful to do well on the sabbath day." But the preparation of food, which the gathering and rubbing the ears of corn were, had no such plea; and, doubtless, the Jews thought they had convicted Jesus and his disciples of neglect of God's law. He first exposes the folly of their objection by two notable instances, that ought to have been well known to them: the first, that of the priests who laboured in the temple service, and so profaned the sabbath, yet were blameless; and the second that of David, who in his extremity took the shewbread, which none but the priests might eat, and both ate of it himself and gave it to them that were with him; the greatness of his emergency justifying departure from a law which was made for man, not man for it. But having thus exposed their ignorance of the

principles of Scripture, which they were professing to defend, and which teach us that "God will have mercy, and not sacrifice," he no longer hesitates to announce that grand truth, which is the ruling principle of the sabbatical institution, under that dispensation which he has founded and sealed with his blood. "THE SON OF MAN IS LORD EVEN OF THE SABBATH DAY." This principle once announced was adequate to all future difficulties, and was exercised by him in various ways, to moderate the Jewish severity of the sabbath, and to renew it to holiness in the fear of the Lord. On another sabbath, therefore, instead of waiting for their objections, and aware that they would advance them if they dared, he opposed them with the inquiry, "Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath day, or to do evil; to save life, or to kill?" And when they held their peace, having looked upon them with anger, being grieved because of the hardness of their hearts, he healed the withered hand, and silenced them, St. Mark, iii. 1. At another time, when about to heal a poor afflicted woman, who for eighteen years had been bowed with

her infirmity, the ruler of the synagogue interposed with the remark, "There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day." But the Lord rebuked him for his hypocrisy, and showed that if the ox or the ass might be loosed and led to water, so might this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound for eighteen years, be loosed from her bond on the sabbath day: St. Luke, xiii. 11—17. A similar case is recorded also by St. Luke, xiv. 1—6. But sufficient has been said to show the authority that our Lord claimed, which of right belonged to him because of his divinity, and by the exercise of which he intended to raise and elevate the nature of the sabbath from its hard servitude under pharisaical exactions, and thereby to prepare the way for its restoration to its original and primitive principle, of a day sanctified to the honour and glory of God, and by him graciously and mercifully bestowed upon man for the refreshment of his body, the edification of his spirit, and the sanctification of his soul.

Our Saviour, then, especially claimed the



sabbath as his own. He claimed to exercise supreme, independent, and Divine authority over it in his lifetime, even to bind or to loose his apostles in respect to it, according to his own will and pleasure, and consequently the ordinance was then, thenceforth and for ever, at his disposal and appointment. If he made none specially by recorded law and commandment, as had been done before at Sinai, this is not at all to be wondered at, because, as he promised to be with his apostles again through the Comforter, saying, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you," so he could, as he did, prompt them, from time to time, to exhibit, by example rather than by precept, what the Spirit guided them to do among the churches. Nor was the sabbath thus less regarded than other things of a similar kind under the Christian dispensation. It is the very essence and nature of Christianity to impress *spiritual principles* upon, rather than to prescribe *services and forms* to, its members. It enjoins baptism and the Lord's supper, and plainly states the essentials of those sacraments; but the form and manner of their

administration it leaves to men to develop. It directs that "men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath or doubting;" that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men;" but the mode of doing so, whether liturgically, or extemporaneously, it leaves wholly to men to determine. And just so it is with the sabbath,—its principle was adopted and practised, but nothing in the nature of a statute was enacted respecting it. Accordingly, though there be no prescribed law for the substitution of the first day instead of the last, there is that which in civil matters supplies the place of statute law, and out of which the great body of the common law of this land has grown—prescribed and known custom, whereby they that have not a law, by doing the things, become a law unto themselves, Rom. ii. 14. Thus the practice of the apostles in this matter works itself into a law, and becomes a guide and authority, and so in effect a precept to us who believe in their inspiration, and trust them for those truths by faith in which we look for salvation.

That this point may be made abundantly

manifest, since upon it rests the authority for the observance of the first day of the week as the Lord's day, rather than the last as according to the law of Sinai, we will consider more at large the proof that the Scripture affords of this, for it is said very confidently by many classes of persons, from various motives, that there is no direct scriptural authority for the substitution of the one day for the other, and for the change of the first day of the week for the last. Some object that there is no authority in Scripture for substituting the Lord's day instead of the sabbath, and contend that the sabbath was entirely done away with, together with all the ceremonies of the Jewish law, and that the Lord's day was a new institution, founded on new principles, and susceptible of a new mode of observance; while others, admitting the perpetuity of the sabbath principle, contend that the Scripture affords no authority at all for the change of the first day for the last; that this change rests upon church authority, not that of Scripture; and so would they exalt the church, that is, tradition, to the place and power of Scripture. Now, with respect

to the first of these, it will be necessary to observe, that such objectors, in order to favour their own view of the matter, altogether misstate and misrepresent the true point for consideration, and then very easily, from their own false premises, deduce the conclusions suitable to their own fancies. What they affirm in this matter is, that we have no authority for substituting, instead of the sabbath, the Lord's day. This is very like the charge often made against Trinitarians, that they make three Gods one God, whereas the true doctrine is three persons but one God; for we do not substitute the Lord's day for the sabbath; on the contrary, we contend that we conserve most faithfully the sabbath in all its integrity, in the fulness of the principle of keeping holy one day in every seven. What we really do, and that for which we contend that we have ample authority, scriptural and apostolical, is the substitution of the first day for the last, and the commemoration thereby of our new creation in Christ Jesus, to the glory and praise of God, the sanctification of every seventh day, and our own holiness thereby. In all which

we contend, that we are acting in compliance with Divine principles, and faithfully employing the sabbath principle which was made for man.

We have intimated above, that the law for the observance of the Lord's day, or first day, as the sabbath, instead of the last day, grew up under the Christian dispensation from custom; and being founded on custom, obtained, and has, all that legal force and energy, which, under similar, though inferior circumstances, the common law of our own land has, having grown up in like manner, and having its foundation likewise in custom. At the same time it is absolutely essential in such a matter as this of the sabbath, to distinguish carefully the *kind of custom* that is essential to establish such a law. It is not the custom of any men or ages that will effect this, for so we should be in danger of allowing equal force to ecclesiastical customs, that is, to tradition and its dark cloud of vanities. But it is only *one kind of men*, whose custom could be allowed in such a case to originate and establish a law of this kind;—they must be inspired men, that is, the

same kind of persons as those from whom we receive in other spiritual matters our only laws and rules;—they must be such as we can wisely and reasonably rely upon as men guided by the Spirit into all truth, and whose regular and confirmed customs in such a matter we may safely adopt and exercise, nay, rather are bound to accept with thankfulness, just as we would their distinct declarations of truth in other matters; and, above all, we must have the evidence of their custom from their own records, that is, from the inspired Scriptures. Nor will it be sufficient that we meet with only hints therein as to what may have been their custom, and then bring proof from others to prop this up and render it more probable. The evidence of Scripture itself must be plain and undeniable: and though, indeed, it may be profitable to us to carry our examination of the question beyond Scripture times, so as to mark the continuance and permanency of the apostolical custom, we must not rely upon this evidence as of authority, in any degree whatever approaching that of Scripture. The Bible is the only authority upon which we may rest for

proof of such an act as that of the changing the sabbath from the last to the first day of the week. With this understanding, then, of the evidence that we are about to adduce, we may now proceed to consider in detail the origin and progress of the change alluded to.

As our Lord had risen on the first day of the week, according to the concurrent testimony of all the four evangelists, so it was on the very same day at evening, that His disciples being assembled, He came and presented himself to them. And after eight days again, (that is, on the following first day,) the disciples having met together on this day, evidently in commemoration of the fact of the resurrection; and Thomas, who had been absent on the previous occasion, being now with them (see John, xx. 19, 20,) Jesus came the second time, in the same miraculous and mysterious manner that he had done at the first, and showed himself openly to them all. Now, since we know that the apostles did, long after this, continue to use the temple worship, and, no doubt, therefore, to keep the Jewish sabbath, which still endured amongst the people of Israel, we may justly conclude that they would be all

together on the sabbath day that succeeded the resurrection of Jesus; but since the Lord did not choose on this occasion to manifest himself to the disciples the second time, but waited until the weekly return of the day of His resurrection, and preferred that one to the day of the Jewish sabbath, we conceive that here, by example, is such a designation of that day, as necessarily originated the custom of its observance under His immediate sanction, and which custom eventually grew into the force and efficacy of law. To begin with, we may observe, a very striking fact in the twentieth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which is thus stated:—"We sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto Troas in five days, where we abode seven days." Now we know that at this very time Paul was hastening on his way to Jerusalem, to be there by the day of Pentecost, and would not even deviate from his course to visit Ephesus, but sent for the elders of that church to meet him at Miletus. Why then did he tarry at Troas *seven days*? The answer to this question is most obvious. He waited for the *first day of the week*, when he might have an



opportunity of addressing the Church at Troas ; for we read, that, “ Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow.” Now had the Jewish sabbath been still in use amongst the disciples at Troas, it would have occurred the day previous to this first day, and the apostle would have availed himself of it, as we know that he continually did amongst the dispersed Jews, to preach to them the gospel. But the silence respecting the sabbath, on the seventh day, the delay of St. Paul a whole week on purpose to be at Troas on the first day, and the coming together of the disciples on that day to break bread—to unite, that is, in the most solemn and blessed rite of our religion ; all these conspire together to assure us, that, in the church at Troas at least, the first day of the week was that of their solemn assembly ; was that which they sanctified by holy worship ; was that in fact which they employed, according to all the primitive principles of the sabbath day. It is evident, too, that Paul only waited for this day, thereby confirming and approving the custom, for he was “ ready to depart on the mor-

row," and so to hasten on to Jerusalem. But that which we thus find to be the custom in one Christian church, confirmed and revered by the apostle himself, we may well believe to have been the practice of other churches under his direction: and this we find to have been the case in that at Corinth; for the apostle, writing to them, exhorts them to do that which he had directed the churches of Galatia also to do; and thereby show, that amongst the Corinthians in Europe, and the Galatians as well as Troades in Asia,—in the churches, that is, both of the West and the East; the observance of the first day of the week had become a fixed and regular custom (1st Cor. xvi., 1, 2.) It had the full sanction and approval of the apostle, as completely as it is possible for any such thing to have, and must therefore be regarded as an ordinance of divinely-inspired authority.

But yet it is said, in answer to all this—there is no distinct commandment, there is no definite law on the subject. Granted. And what then? There was no law of the sabbath even from the first, but only the enunciation of a principle; but those who believed the principle acted it

out, and so by doing it, made it a law to themselves. True, in the case of the Christian sabbath, there is not an absolute commandment, but there is the exhibition of a principle by example, if not by actual order, as in the case of the churches of Troas, Galatia, and Corinth; (observe well, 1st Cor xvi., 1, 2;) and that principle was the use of the first day of the week instead of the seventh, and consequently the authoritative substitution of the one for the other.

That which we find thus ordained by apostolical example, concurrence, and approval, in the churches founded by the great apostle of the Gentiles, we subsequently find confirmed by the apostle St. John, when he wrote his Apocalypse, and the very name bestowed upon the day, and well known in his time, which has continued ever since to be the proper and distinguishing appellation of the Christian sabbath. St. John calls it "the Lord's day," and he tells us, that being "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," (Rev. i. 10,) those wonderful revelations were made known to him, which form the most astonishing series of prophecies that the Scripture

contains. This, again, is a direct approval of the day by inspiration ; for since the Spirit preferred this day whereon to communicate with the divine St. John, what is such an act of the Spirit but a confirmation of the practice which had already grown, and a re-stamping as it were with His authority the custom of thus employing the first day, which had become now a fixed one in the Christian church, under the title of the Lord's day ?

That which had thus been originated by our Lord himself, who preferred it for the occasion of showing himself after his resurrection to all his disciples ; which had been introduced by St. Paul into all the churches that he had founded ; which St. John was well acquainted with the use of ; and which the Spirit had confirmed, by honouring it as the season of His wondrous revelations ; that same day we afterwards find in use in the church, spoken of by the same name, separated to the holy exercises of the sabbath, and yet distinguished from the vain and superstitious employment of that holy day, which had grown up amongst the Jews. For Ignatius, one of the generation immediately

succeeding to the apostles, writes thus concerning it:—"If, then, they who, having had their conversation in the old law, have attained to newness of hope, no longer keeping the sabbath as the Jews do, but living in conformity with the Lord's day, on which also He who is our life rose again of himself," &c.—Ignat.: to the Magn: IX. Tertullian also gives it the same name, and distinguishes it from the Jewish sabbath, thus, "the sabbaths and Lord's day indeed being excepted."—De Jejun. cx. v. Upon the authority of Eusebius, in several passages of his history, we learn that others also commonly spoke of it as the Lord's day, for Dionysius of Corinth, writing to Soter of Rome, says, "To day we have passed the Lord's holy day, in which we have read your epistle," iv. 23. And Melito, of Sardis, wrote a sermon "on the Lord's day," iv. 26; and Irenæus wrote an epistle, "in which he maintains the duty of celebrating the mystery of the resurrection of our Lord only on the day of the Lord," v. 24. So, that it is quite evident that this day, which was the first day, was revered as the Lord's day, and observed on the principles of the sabbath

day, the practice having originated with our Lord and his apostles, and having been dutifully and faithfully kept by the believers afterwards.

In deference to the heathens, however, to whom the Christian teachers had to address themselves, and in consideration of their ignorance of the Lord's day and its signification, they made use of another term, Sunday, which was understood by them, because it denoted to the heathen that particular day of the week, which as the Lord's day was thenceforth to enjoy and exercise the principles, graces and privileges of the sabbath. Thus, Justin Martyr in his *Apology* writes, "We all come together on the day of the sun (Sunday); because it is the first day upon which God, having changed darkness and matter, created the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour rose again from the dead on this day."—*Apoll.* ii. p. 99. This is a remarkable passage, for it expressly points out the substitution of the first day, known to the heathen as the day of the sun, the day of light, and very beautifully adapts the fact of God having created light on the first day, and

so connects it with our Lord's resurrection on the first day, as to exhibit Him as the Light risen upon the world; "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" the "Sun of righteousness that had arisen with healing in his wings;" and whom, therefore, they were thenceforth to worship as the true God, instead of that material luminary, which hitherto they had served in darkness amid all his meridian light and glory. And to this purpose, Tertullian, writing to the heathens, who imagined, that, because the Christians met for worship on their day of the sun, therefore they must honour the sun, explains, that, in "using the day as one of joy and gladness, they do so from far other reasons than the adoration of the sun."—Apoll. c. xvi. The term Sunday, came more and more into use, as laws of the empire were enacted for enforcing the observance of the Lord's day; for the Emperors Constantine, Valentinian the elder and the younger, and Theodosius the elder and the younger, all thus style it, though sometimes taking care to distinguish it as the Lord's day; thus in an act of the younger Valentinian, "On

Sunday, which our forefathers have rightly and customarily called the Lord's day." And the day so observed and notified by imperial laws, be it remembered, was still the first day of the week, and was treated with all the reverence and respect which the most ancient sabbatical principles prescribed.

Hence, then, we have learned the origin of the common name of the sabbath—Sunday, or the Lord's day; but, under both appellations, we learn that it was the first day of the week that was so designated, and that it had become substituted throughout the Christian world, and wherever Christianity prevailed, as the weekly day of assembly for religious worship among the believers, and for all the holy and sanctified uses, to which the sabbath had been from the beginning ordained. Thenceforth hath it continued a time-honoured ordinance, and henceforth, even for ever, may it, as indeed it must and will, endure, until merged in the eternal sabbath which remaineth to the people of God.

It has been asserted above, that while there is no statute, or commandment, directly substituting the first day of the week for the sabbath



instead of the last; that is, while there is no statute law for the change, there is that which is always deemed equivalent to such law; namely, custom or common law. And we have shown this custom, first, in the case of the Saviour himself and his apostles, and then the continuance of it in the church subsequently. Now we desire to distinguish again very carefully between these two classes of evidence in proof of the custom. Were this any mere temporal matter, the custom and practice of any class of persons would be sufficient to prove it, and thereon to establish legal force and power. But, in a matter of the spiritual nature of the sabbath, no such species of evidence would be adequate; for to allow this, would be to open the floodgates of tradition, and to overwhelm us with its monstrous errors and absurdities. Unless we could show an apostolical origin and sanction for this custom, and that directly and plainly recorded in Scripture; that is, unless we could show a distinct Scriptural origin for the custom, we should not allow or contend for it. But since, as we have done, we have shown our Saviour himself first

adopting it, then the apostle Paul following him in all his churches, St. John acknowledging the same, and the Spirit confirming it by gracing it with the abundance of the revelations,—we feel perfectly safe in coming to the conclusion, not on the authority of tradition, not on ecclesiastical authority, but on the authority of Christ, His apostles, and the Spirit, that the first day of the week, under the title of the Lord's day, had succeeded to all the honours, dignity, precedence, sanctification, and blessing, which its great progenitor, the sabbath day, had so long enjoyed.

The observance of the first day of the week rather than the last, as the Christian sabbath, is, indeed, wisely adapted to the dispensation of grace and hope under which we live, if we do but rightly consider its propriety, and profit by the lesson of its appropriateness. The law could not give life, the gospel can. The covenant of works was deadly, that of grace is life-giving: "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righ-

teousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”—“The commandment which was ordained to life, was found to be unto death.”—But “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death.” The observance of the seventh day was remarkably appropriate to the latter law: it was like offering a recompence for the sins that were past, and to which we were, in fact, dead. The sabbath was the note of death to the week that had passed away. To adopt the language of Dr. Young,—

“We take no note of time but by its loss;  
To give it then a tongue were wise in man.”

The sabbath on the seventh day was a sign that six more days were past, and that another period of our life had sped away. It was a continual record of our dying, so that on it,

“The man kept following still the funeral of the boy.”

How different is the Christian sabbath! What is it but the receiving of life from the dead?—It is a perpetual rising again to newness of life. It is no day of sorrow, sadness, and mourning,

but one of joy and gladness, as when the bridegroom cometh. It is not a day of death, but of life. It throws not a shadowy gloom over the days that are past, but cheers us with bright prospects for the future. It is a day of hope. It casts its genial rays on those that are coming. It beams mildly over the future, and rejoices the heart of the Christian with its grateful anticipations: "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," it teaches us to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

## CHAPTER VI.

### TESTIMONY OF PROFANE WRITERS TO THE PRIMITIVE INSTITUTION OF THE SABBATH.

IN order that we may rightly appreciate the testimony, afforded by other writers than those of the Holy Scripture, to the primitive institution of the sabbath, it will be well to observe upon the sources, whence such traditionary knowledge, however much adulterated by fiction, was derived by them, and has been transmitted to us, so as to show that they are independent witnesses, though originally claiming their instruction from the same primitive fountain.

In entering upon this task, we are, as already intimated, to extend our researches beyond the records of Holy Writ, and to seek in profane history such traces, as we believe do plainly indicate the origin of such an institution as that of the sabbath. In doing this, however, we must

adopt an entirely new arrangement, in order to give full effect to the circumstantial evidence we are about to produce ; and in order to explain the method of this, we must remind the reader of certain facts, which, though well known to him, he must nevertheless, for this purpose, regard in the light we are about to present them to him. Let it be borne in mind, then, that the whole channel of primitive history, and especially of the records of the sabbatical institution, were by the deluge brought within the confines of the ark, were limited to the single family of Noah, and thence must have descended by the streams, originating in this salient fountain of humanity, to the different families, tribes, or nations, amongst whom we propose to trace them. We must briefly state, without attempting to discuss the matter here, that mankind having emigrated from Mount Ararat, in Armenia, where Noah had come forth from the ark, where the ark itself rested, a monumental relic of God's mercy and justice, and where the first altar had been erected to his honour, followed the course of the Euphrates until they reached the plain of Shinar,

and there perpetrated that great act of rebellious pride, the building of Babel, “to make them a name, lest they should be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.” To punish them for such a daring act of impiety and pride God confounded their language, and all history conspires to assure us, that the three families of mankind were from that time separated from one another, and have thenceforth continued to disperse, and spread themselves over the earth. Japheth, the elder son of Noah, appears to have led the way in this dispersion, and to have been drawn towards Armenia, the resting-place of the ark and the locality of the primitive altar. In the same direction, and probably with the same object in view, Shem pursued the same route, and pressing upon the rear of Japheth, compelled him to cross the Caucasus, and so to enter Europe. Shem and his posterity settled around Mount Ararat, and to the westward and eastward of it, in positions that we have not space here to explain; while Japheth, having crossed the Caucasus, spread himself according to the words of the prophecy, “God shall enlarge Japheth,”

far and wide, over the larger portion of the globe. Ham and his posterity continued still to occupy the scene of man's rebellion, until they at length separated, and betaking themselves to Canaan, descended into Egypt, and thence dispersed themselves throughout the torrid wilds of Africa. It is evident, then, that we thus open up three distinct main channels of tradition, for any such fact, as the primitive institution of the sabbath, being transmitted to future ages; and it is in these natural channels, that we now propose to trace such indications of it as history may afford.

We will begin, however, with mentioning one fact that is common to both the Shemitic and Japhetic races, and which is stated in these words by Mrs. Somerville in her "Connexion of the Physical Sciences."—"The division of the year into months is very old, and almost universal; but the period of seven days, by far the most permanent division of time, and the most ancient monument of astronomical knowledge, was used by the Brahmins, in India, with the same denominations employed by us; and was alike found in the calendars of the Jews,



Egyptians, Arabs, and Assyrians ; it has survived the fall of empires, and has existed amongst all successive generations, a proof of their common origin." First—let the reader observe that the Brahmins, that is, the Hindoos, are of the Japhetic race ; while the Jews, Egyptians, Arabs and Assyrians are of the Shemitic. And whence, then, the origin amongst them all of a division of time according to weeks, which Mrs. Somerville justly observes is a proof of their common origin as races. Such a division is not a natural one, nor did it accord with the number of days in their months and year ; for we know that the former contained thirty days, making the year consist of 360, without intercalations, and even with them, in order to complete the earth's full course in her orbit, the number of days will not divide into weeks. Periods of seven days are not adapted to either the moon's or the earth's courses in their orbits, and could not therefore have resulted from natural divisions of time. They must have had some other origin, and that of weeks, commencing from the creation, according to the account of Moses, and handed down by tradition, is so obvious as at once to

afford the right one, and thereby to indicate the primitive design and appointment of the sabbath, recurring every seventh day. In the case of the Hindoos this evidence is most remarkable, because, as stated by Dr. Robertson in the Appendix to his "Disquisition on Ancient India," p. 819, the most accurate astronomical records that they possess commence at a period not less than 5,000 years from the present time, are more accurate in the earliest periods than in those nearer our own times, and consequently lead to the inference, that they must have been made from observations at the time, and have not been compiled from subsequent retrospective calculations. If this is to be considered as proved, and if with it may be combined the fact of a division of time according to weeks, then have we a high and valuable testimony to the origin and use of the sabbath, and one altogether independent of, because prior to, the account of Moses, and resting therefore upon an authority different from his; for the Hindoos, being of the Japhetian race, must have had their tradition from Japhet, who of course had it from Noah : and thus while it came from the same source as that of Moses,

it came down through a different channel, and consequently affords an independent proof of the early institution and remembrance of the sabbath.

### I. *The Shemitic race.*

In first directing our attention to the sabbatical traditions of the Shemitic race, independent of those which the Israelites and Moses afford, the Scriptures will furnish us with some of the earliest and best-authenticated proofs of these.

The oldest upon record is that occurring in the history of Job the Idumæan, the period of whose trial has been accurately fixed by Dr. Hales in the second patriarchal age, 184 years before the birth of Abraham. This is long antecedent to, and therefore altogether independent of, the giving of the commandments at Sinai; and what is more, Job has an express revelation for what he does. But as it has ever been the nature of God, to condescend as much as possible to the righteous doings of men, in their service of Him, so we may understand, that what in this case He commanded to be done by the three friends of Job, was not only agreeable to himself, but accordant also with the religious rites of the nation

amongst whom it was to be done, and may be regarded therefore as a well-known ordinance of devotion. The offering then of *seven* bullocks and *seven* rams may be regarded as proofs of a tradition, retrospective of the primitive institution of the sabbath amongst the Idumæans, and commemorative of the facts of the creation out of which it originated.

Another similar case is that of Balaam of Pethor, in Mesopotamia, who, coming from the country in which Abraham had been born about 500 years before, and which he had quitted at least 430 years previously (Exod. xii. 41), must be regarded as a witness of the preservation in that country of religious rites and customs, evidently having their origin in such an institution as the sabbath, and thereby serving to prove its primitive origin and continued commemoration in that land. Balaam, an unrighteous and unprincipled prophet or priest, is brought, in defiance of God's commandment, and in manifest ignorance of the true God, to curse, at the desire of the king of Moab, God's chosen people, whom he has brought out of Egypt, and to whom he has given his command-

ments at Mount Sinai. Balaam, therefore, cannot possibly know anything of these commandments, or of the sabbatical institution as confirmed by them. He must have had his glimpses of the sabbath, if indeed he had any idea at all of it;—but certainly he must have had his traditions, which had survived the observance of it, from some other source than that of the ten commandments. In fact, he must have had, and there must have endured in his nation, some primitive tradition to occasion the preference and use of the number seven, that he shows in the religious rites which he directs the king of Moab to engage in. Three times does he officiate for him, hoping to propitiate the favour of the God of Israel, and to wean him from his chosen people, and each time does he erect *seven* altars, and sacrifice upon each *seven* bullocks, and seven *rams*. Is there not in this so remarkable a coincidence with Abraham's peace-offering to Abimelech of seven ewe lambs, as plainly to indicate a common origin of such a use of the number seven, and that long previous to the giving of the commandments, and so an evidence of a

traditionary knowledge of the sabbath and its primitive institution?

There still survives amongst the Arabians such a mystical and superstitious use of the number seven as we have had occasion elsewhere to remark upon, and which clearly indicates an origin of no ordinary kind. For though traces of this are observable even in the Scriptures themselves, yet this was not the sort of thing that Mahomet in forging his false system was likely to have culled from thence, but is much more likely to have existed amongst the descendants of Ishmael, as a tradition handed down to them from their very origin, that is, from the time of Abraham, and indicating, therefore, in the patriarchal times a similar tradition, if not the recognition and observance of the sabbath. We learn this mystical use of the number seven from the celebrated traveller Burckhardt, who has given to the world the only authentic account we have of the city of Mecca, of the holy temple there, and of the ceremonies required of all the faithful that perform pilgrimage to it. He tells us, that the approach to the Kaaba, that is, the most

holy place, is across an area surrounding it by *seven* paved causeways. The principal ceremony to be performed there is the towaf, or circuit of the Kaaba, which every pilgrim has to go round *seven* times. Again, at the spot called Meroua, *seven* perambulations have to be made. At Wady Mura is the scene of Abraham's contest with the devil Eblis, who assaulted the patriarch three times, and each time was repulsed by *seven* stones with which Abraham pelted him. Three pillars mark the spots where these attacks of the evil one took place, and at each of these every pilgrim has to cast *seven* stones. Three days successively is this ceremony repeated, on each of which the *seven* stones are three times cast. Immediately upon their return from Wady Mura, the pilgrims have, for the second time, to make *seven* circuits of the Kaaba, and *seven* perambulations at Meroua; and a third time, before their pilgrimage is complete, have the *seven* circuits and *seven* perambulations to be performed. And here, beyond all doubt, is the mystical and superstitious use of the number seven which we have remarked upon.



## 2. *The Japhetic race.*

That there was a mystical and sacred use of the number seven from the earliest times amongst the Greeks, is evidenced from the manner in which Homer employs it: for he constantly applies epithets compounded of this number to subjects that demanded excessive praise, as he calls Thebes, the city of the seven gates,

Ἡμεῖς καὶ Θῆβης ἔδος ἔιλομεν ἑπταπύλοιο ;  
and describes the shield of Ajax as formed of seven bulls' hides,

Ὅς οἱ ἐποίησεν σάκος αἰόλον, ἑπταβοέιον.

But some have even supposed, that, besides this indication of a primitive acquaintance with the sabbath amongst the Greeks, they had a more direct knowledge of it, and understood something of its sacred and holy character. So at least, for one, did Clemens Alexandrinus, who, writing upon the subject, observes, Ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἑβδομὴν ἱερὰν οὐ μόνον οἱ Ἑβραῖοι ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ Ἕλληνες ἴσασι. Stromatum, lib. v. "But as for the seventh day, not only the Hebrews but the Greeks also know that it is sacred." This, his assertion, he proceeds to fortify by a



number of quotations from various authors; all of which we will present to the reflection and judgment of the reader. His first authority is Hesiod, from whom he quotes two passages:—

πρῶτον ἐνῆ τετράς τὲ καὶ ἑβδομον ἱερὸν ἡμᾶς;  
in which the seventh day is said to be sacred;  
and again,

ἑβδομάτῃ, δ' αὖθις λαμπρὸν φάος ηἰλίοιο—  
implying that the seventh day is the splendid light of the sun. He then refers to Homer; from whom he quotes—first,

ἑβδομάτῃ, δ' ἣ πειτα κατήλυθεν ἱερὸν ἡμᾶρ.

“Then came the seventh day that is sacred;”  
and secondly,

ἑβδομον ἡμᾶρ εἶν καὶ τῷ τετελεστο ἅπαντα.

“It was the seventh day, and on that all things were made perfect.”

To these a third quotation, of similar import, from Homer may be added, although it is not amongst those referred to by Clemens. It is this,

ἑβδομή ἦν ἱερή.

“The seventh day was sacred.”

The next authority cited by Clemens is Cal-

limachus; from whose writings he gives the following passages :

*ἐβδομάτῃ ἡοῖ καὶ οὐ τετύκοντο ἅπαντα.*

“ The seventh day, wherein all thing swere created.”

*ἐβδόμη ἐν ἀγαθοῖσι καὶ ἐβδόμη ἐστι γενέθλη.*

“ The seventh day is amongst our blessings, and the seventh day is the nativity (of all things).”

*ἐβδόμη ἐν πρώτοισι καὶ ἐβδόμη ἐστι τελείη.*

“ The seventh day is among our choicest things, and the seventh day is (itself) perfect.”

*Ἐπτα δὲ πάντα τέτυκτο ἐν οὐρανῷ ἀστεροεντι*

*Ἐν κύκλοισι φανέντ' ἐπιτελλομένοις ἐνιαυτοῖς.*

“ All things were made perfect (seven) in the starry heaven, as they appear in their orbits through revolving years.”

And, lastly, Clemens cites from Lucian of Samosata, the words, *ὁ δὲ Ἐβδόμην* ὅτι ὥσπερ οἱ παῖδες ἐν ταῖς ἐβδόμαις, which he understood as implying that boys had the seventh day allowed them as a holiday; and inferred that the origin of this was in the original separation of the seventh day as the sacred day of rest. Nor is such an inference without plausibility, since

we see in our own day many holidays and festivals surviving, although the origin of them is altogether lost in remote antiquity; and no improbable thing is it, that the schoolboys' holiday should be retained, even though the occasion that originated it might have been first neglected, and subsequently altogether forgotten.

The evidence of the Roman people to a traditional acquaintance with the weekly or sabbatical division of time, has hitherto been regarded as not affording much aid in the matter, but we trust to be able to show in the following observations, that this idea has arisen from their division of time not being properly examined and reviewed in the light of this inquiry, and that there was amongst them quite as full a knowledge of the subject, as they could be expected to have acquired from tradition.

Adam, in his "Roman Antiquities," remarks, "The ancient Romans did not divide their time into weeks, as we do in imitation of the Jews. The country people came to Rome every ninth day, (see page 78), whence these days were called NUNDINÆ QUASI NOVENDINÆ, having seven intermediate days for working, *Macrob. i. 16.*"

In confirmation of which statement from Macrobius, Adam gives, at page 78, to which he refers, the following passage, “*Nundinæ a Romanis nono quoque die celebratæ; intermediis septem diebus occupabantur ruri*,” Dionys. ii. 28; vii. 58; “*reliquis septem rura colebant*,” Varro de Re Rust. præf. 11. But yet these “seven intermediate days, forming a week of working days, are exactly such an *imperfect* resemblance of a proper week, as we should expect would occur in the lapse of years, having an affinity of form to the original and primitive week, but not the very substance of it. Another imperfect resemblance, to the same effect, is also mentioned by Adam, who says, “The *comitia* were not held on the market days, *nundinis*, because they were ranked among the *feriæ*, or holy days, on which no business could be done with the people, *Macrob.* i. 16—(*ne plebs rustica avocaretur*, lest they should be called off from their ordinary business of buying and selling).—*Plin.* xviii. 3.” All this is quite natural, for, observing that their acquaintance with the sabbath must have been traditional, and consequently very imperfect, it is

easy to see how, after seven days had been taken for the week of working days, every ninth day came to be regarded as holy; and how the people, while they claimed exemption from all legal claims upon their time on this day, because it was holy, allowed themselves at the same time the use of it for gain and for pleasure,—the manner in which the sabbath day is commonly employed even in these times in Roman Catholic countries.

Adam further tells us that “the custom of dividing time into weeks, *hebdomades—vel dæ, vel septimanæ*, was introduced under the emperors. Dio, who flourished under Severus, says it first took place a little before his time, being derived from the Egyptians; and universally prevailed,” xxxvii. 18. Now this very correction is also confirmatory of the principle on which they had hitherto acted. They had gone upon an erroneous conception of the proper week of seven days, making it, in fact, eight, and treating every ninth day as a holy day; but no sooner do they receive through the Egyptians the true and proper account of the weekly division of time, as testified to by uni-

versal practice, than they correct their own and adopt the more general and useful one.

Of such an use of the number seven, as implies a mystical or superstitious reverence for it, and therefore some old and sacred origin of it, there are abundant proofs. Thus Virgil relates that the Athenians were doomed to make an annual offering of *seven* youths as an atonement for the assassination of Androgeos, the son of Minos, king of Crete :—

“ In foribus Lethum Androgeo: tum pendere pœnas  
Cecropidæ jussi, miserum, *septena* quotannis  
Corpora natorum.”

Other authorities make the offering *seven* youths and *seven* virgins, and the period of its presentation every *seventh* year, or every *ninth*, which last even agrees with the ninth day being regarded as a holy one, as noticed above. Again ; in remarkable similarity to the offering of *seven* ewe lambs by Abraham to Abimelech, of Balaam and Balak offering *seven* bullocks and *seven* rams on *seven* altars, and of Job offering, as an atonement for his friends, *seven* bullocks and *seven* rams, is the command of

the priestess Deiphobe to Æneas to offer *seven* bullocks and *seven* ewes :—

“ Nunc grege de intacto *septem* mactare juvencos  
Præstiterit, *totidem* lectas de more bidentes.”

In the fable of Orpheus and Eurydice he is represented as bewailing her loss for *seven* months :—

“ *Septem* illum totos perhibent ex ordine menses,  
Rupe sub æeriâ, deserti ad Strymonis undam  
Flevisse. ———”

Whenever it is desired to express some vague yet imposing number, *seven* is the one preferred. Accordingly the depth and heaviness of the Scythian snows are thus represented :—

“ Sed jacet aggeribus niveis informis, et alto  
Terra gelu latè, *septemque* assurgit in ulnas.

So again the serpent is described as coiled in his *seven* circles :—

“ ————— adytis cum lubricus anguis ab imis  
*Septem* ingens gyros, *septena* volumina traxit.”

The life of bees is supposed to be limited to *seven* years :—

“ Neque enim plus septima ducitur ætas.”

Shields, the most useful weapon of defence in war, and therefore prepared with most peculiar and superstitious care, are constantly represented as of *sevenfold* structure ; thus,—

“ Ingentem clypeum informant, unum omnia contra  
Tela Latinorum; *septenosque* orbibus orbes  
Impediunt.”

So again when Turnus is transfixed,—

“ Volat atri turbinis instar  
Exitium dirum hasta ferens, orasque recludit  
Loricæ, et clypei extremos *septemplicis* orbes.”

But even the *seventh* day itself was accounted a propitious one, a remnant of its original sanctity thus surviving all the corruptions and abuses it had undergone :—

“ Septima, post decimum, felix, et ponere vitem,  
Et prenos domitare boves, et licia telæ  
Addere.”

A passage which may thus be freely rendered :  
“ Next to the tenth day of the month the *seventh* is the most auspicious for planting the vine, breaking in the captured oxen, and joining the woof to the web.” For although it has been



suggested that *septima post decimum* may mean the seventeenth day of the month, this would not agree with the context, which first refers to the fifth as an unlucky day, then, as here, to the seventh, and afterwards to the ninth.

What we have thus gleaned from Virgil we find confirmed by Horace, who uses the number seven in the same manner, thus,

“ Dum *septem* donat sestertia, mutua *septem*  
Promittit.”

That the Persians, who were a people of Japhetian origin, had some traditionary, though for that very reason uncertain, knowledge of the sabbath, is implied by Tertullian when he writes of them, “Æquè si diem solis lætitiæ indulgemus, aliâ longè ratione quam religione solis,” (Tertull. Apol. versus Gentis. xvi.) “If we, like them, celebrate Sunday as a day of rejoicing, it is for a reason very different from that of the worship of the sun.” From whence it is to be inferred, that, while Christians revered the Lord’s day, which amongst some nations obtained the name of Sunday, the Persians used the same day as a weekly festival

in honour of the sun, as we shall presently see that other nations of Japhetian origin did.

It may be proper here to introduce the evidence of two celebrated Jewish writers, who have borne their testimony to the universal observance of the sabbath, and thereby to its primitive institution. Josephus, in his second book against Appian, observes, "there is not any city of the Grecians, nor any of the barbarians, nor any nation whatsoever, whither our custom of resting on the seventh day hath not come." Again Philo, discoursing on the creation of the world, remarks, "and when the whole world was completed, according to the perfect nature of the number six, the Father hallowed the succeeding seventh day, praising it, and calling it holy. For it is a feast not of one city or country, but of every one; which also properly deserves to be called the only universal feast, because (as it were) the birthday of the world." Now, although both these authors being Jews attributed the general prevalence of the sabbatical institution, which they observed amongst the nations, to their own peculiar laws, as it was but natural that they should, conceiving such to be the fact,

yet we have not to do with this their conjecture, but simply with the fact to which they attest. It was natural for them to imagine that the nations thus did homage to their institutions; but it is unreasonable, from what we know of the Jewish law, that this could have been the case. It was purposely designed to keep Israel distinct as a people from the Gentiles, by excluding them from all participation in the privileges and blessings secured to the Jews. Thus the Jews were at enmity with all mankind, esteeming them uncovenanted sinners and the enemies of God; while the nations despised or hated the Jews, and were therefore altogether unlikely to adopt any of their feasts. But since we find the testimony to the fact of a feast existing amongst the nations similar to that of the sabbath, the only conclusion we can draw is, that it had its origin in a different source, that is, in the primitive one, whence doubtless it had descended by tradition.

We have already referred to the traditionary testimony afforded by the Hindoos in their division of time into weeks, and the highly interesting conclusions to be drawn from that fact, com-

bined with their very early and most accurate astronomical records; and now having reminded the reader of this, we will adduce some other proofs to the same effect, which will, we think, strongly confirm the impression, that these people had amongst them some traditions which occasioned them to account the number seven as something mystical and holy. India is famous for its pagodas, which are evidently formed upon the model of the pyramids, these having, as we believe, their prototype in the tower of Babel. Be this as it may, some of the pagodas of India are of the very highest antiquity, and are esteemed as most sacred by the people. These occur chiefly in the south of India, where the extreme vehemence of Mahomedan zeal did not reach, so as to effect their destruction. Such an one is that of Chillambram, near Porto Nevo, on the Coromandel coast, held in high veneration on account of its antiquity. But superior to it in sanctity, as well as in grandeur, is the pagoda of Seringham, on the island of that name. "It is composed," writes Orme in his 'History of Military Transactions of Hindostan,' vol. i. p. 178, "of *seven* square enclosures, one within

the other, the walls of which are twenty-five feet high, and four thick." The sides of these squares, as in the case of the pyramids, face the four cardinal points, and the place is highly venerated, and resorted to as a place of pilgrimage. There are also remarkable excavations in a mountain at Mavalipuram, near Madras, which is well known on the Coromandel coast by the name of the Seven Pagodas.

There is a very strong indication of acquaintance with and remembrance of the creation, and of a period of seven days, in the ancient accounts that have come down of the origin and number of castes in India. Dr. Robertson, in the Notes and Illustrations to his "Disquisition on Ancient India," writes, "According to all the writers of antiquity, the Indians are said to be divided into seven tribes or castes.—*Strabo*, lib. xv., p. 1029, c., etc.; *Diod. Sic.*, lib. ii., p. 153; etc.; *Arrian*, *Indic.* c. 10." But although he regards this as an error of these authors, because there are at the present day only four castes, and because the sacred books of the Hindoos name no more; yet the source from whence these historians, Strabo, Diodorus, and Arrian, obtained

their information, was one likely to be well informed on the subject from a personal residence in India during some years, and an intimate acquaintance with the manners of the people in his time. This was Megasthenes, who visited India on an embassy from Seleucus Nicator, king of Syria, about three hundred years before the Christian era, and who wrote a history of his sojourn there, which is no longer extant, although the substance of some portions of it are preserved in the writers already referred to. Megasthenes distinctly names the castes as follows : —1, philosophers ; 2, agriculturists ; 3, herdsmen and hunters ; 4, handicraftsmen and artizans ; 5, warriors ; 6, public inspectors ; 7, royal councillors. The first of these, the philosophers, correspond with the religious caste, the Brahmins, and so are suitable to one holy day in the seven ; while the remaining six rise in the due orders of society, as they exist amongst ourselves, from the lowest of the labouring classes to the chief officers of state. All this the more confirms the evidence of Megasthenes ; and if in subsequent times some of these castes have been merged in others, so as to reduce the primitive number

seven to four, this is no more than often happens in the vicissitudes of human affairs : nor is there anything so excessively immutable in the nature of caste to render this either impossible, or improbable even, for changes are still going on; and although nominally four castes still exist in India, yet one of these is properly extinct, for the kshatriza, or military class, is said by the Brahmins to be lost, they themselves having succeeded to their calling, as they have done indeed to every other, even condescending to cook the victuals of an inferior class ; while sudras on the other hand, although the lowest and most degraded class, have risen into royal power, and have frequently, when enriched by their own industry, employed even Brahmins as their cooks.\* There is nothing then so certain in the system of castes in India as to render it probable that they have always been four, or improbable that they may not have been seven ; nor any reason therefore to doubt the direct testimony of Megasthenes, which was early received and confided in.

The traditionary origin of the Hindoo castes,

\* See Penny Cyclopædia, Art. HINDOSTAN, *Castes*.

referring as it does to the creation, strengthens the deduction we would make from the fact of their number having been originally seven. It is said that in the first creation by Brahma, Brahmanas proceeded, with the Veda, from the mouth of Brahma, and other castes from various limbs. This proceeding from the mouth of Brahma agrees exactly with the truth of man's creation, when God spake and he was made; and the formation of seven classes, six of them secular men and the seventh religious, is equally suitable to six days of labour, and one a holy one.

In an Indian History of the Deluge, translated by Sir William Jones, and to be found in the first volume of the "Asiatic Researches," occur the two following verses:—"In *seven* days from the present time, O thou tamer of enemies, the three worlds will be plunged in an ocean of death; but in the midst of the destroying waves a large vessel, sent by me for thy use, shall stand before thee. Then shalt thou take all medicinal herbs, all the variety of seeds, and, accompanied by *seven* saints, encircled by pairs of brute animals, thou shalt enter the spacious ark, and continue



in it secure from the flood, on one immense ocean, without light, except the radiance of thy holy companions," (26, 27.) The first observation that must strike us on perusing, not only the above passages but the whole account, is, that they contain the facts of the occurrence sufficiently clear to show that the writer must have derived his knowledge of them from a source identical with that whence Moses derived his, while at the same time there is that adulteration of them by traditional and visionary lore, which at once distinguishes them from the simple and unvarnished tale of the inspired historian, and makes his rudiments of truth appear the more pure and excellent. In fact the moral of our comparison between this account and that of Moses is, but for his inspiration to guide him into all truth, in what follies should we as well as the Hindoos be involved. But when we come to look at that account by the side of that of Moses, we cannot fail to observe this remarkable testimony to their common origin. The inspired history represents God as saying, "for yet *seven* days and I will cause it to rain upon the earth, &c.;" and the traditionary one makes "The

Lord of the Universe" thus instruct "the holy being, named Satyavrata, a servant of the spirit which served on the waves, and so devout, that water was his only sustenance," thus, "in *seven* days from the present time, the three worlds will be plunged in an ocean of death." At the same time we may remark the mystical use which the number seven had already attained, for the king was to be "accompanied by *seven* saints."

As to the antiquity of these writings, Sir W. Jones says, (p. 340,) "The laws ascribed to Mesech, and received *orally* from him, (vol. ii., p. 164,) in whatever age they might have been first promulgated, could not have received their present form above 3000 years ago." The Brahmins, however, attribute them to the first age of the world; and even on Sir W. Jones's hypothesis, they must have had an origin anterior to the time of Moses, and though coming from the same source whence he derived his, must have descended by another and an independent channel, namely, that of the family of Japheth, the great progenitor of the Hindoo nation.

That our Saxon ancestors had amongst them

traditions, implying an early acquaintance with some institution or original, such as that of the sabbath, is evident from various customs that still prevail. Southey, in his "Book of the Church," observes on this very point, "The heathenism which they introduced bears no affinity, either to that of the Britons, or of the Romans. It is less known than either; because, while it subsisted as a living form of belief, the few writers who arose in these illiterate ages were incurious concerning such things; but it has left familiar traces in our daily speech, and in many of those popular customs which in various parts of the country still partially maintain their ground." Now one of the most obvious of these, and one that agrees exactly with the subject we are considering, is their use of a week of seven days as their division of time, all the names of which days are still in common use amongst us. Thus our Sunday is derived from their Sun's day, Monday from their Moon's day, Tuesday from Tuisday, Wednesday from Woden's day, Thursday from Thor's day, Friday from Friga's day, Saturday from Seater's day. There is an apparent resemblance in the names of some of

the days to those which the Romans applied to their days of the week, and which were named after the several divinities, Apollo, Diana, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn; but there is at the same time that disparity that shows their traditions to have flowed in different channels, though their primitive origin was doubtless the same. But as we know that the Romans obtained their weeks of seven days from the Egyptians, the Saxons must have derived theirs from another source, and obviously from the northern families of the Japhetic race, with which they were immediately connected.

### 3. *The Hamitic race.*

The last channel of information that we have proposed to open up, is one that, like the swarthy complexions of the race composing it, is so dark and mysterious, from the absence of all literature, records and history amongst them, as to afford but slender hopes of much being derived from it. The children of Ham, known in modern times as the Africans, have amongst them none of the ordinary means or sources of information that the civilized nations of the earth have enjoyed,

and amongst the existing tribes of that degraded people it would be exceedingly difficult to attempt to pursue such an investigation as we have engaged in. It must not, however, be forgotten, that in some of their original sites and localities they have left behind them some memorials of their pristine daring and grandeur, and these we think will furnish us with indications of their having at one time been in possession of such an institution as the sabbath. It is well known to every student of history, that the children of Ham continued in possession of the tower of Babel in the plain of Shinar, the origin of the subsequent mighty city of Babylon, and that when they separated thence they descended into Egypt, the ancient name of which, and that by which it is still known amongst the Arabs and the Hindoos, was Mizraim, that being the name of the son of Ham, who settled with his family here, and first possessed the country. We propose, therefore, to search amongst the earliest remains both of Babylon and Egypt, for such traces as they may afford of an early traditionary knowledge of the sabbatical institution.

Babylon at this day offers not a vestige of information. The Birs-Nimroud stands a blackened and smouldering heap, testifying strongly indeed to the predicted vengeance, that it should be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, but revealing no more of the past than that lake of oblivion, the Dead Sea itself. But Babylon and the temple of Belus were visited by the father of profane history, Herodotus, while yet it stood in primeval glory to tell its own tale, and he has left us a most memorable description of it, which runs thus: "The temple of Jupiter Belus, whose huge gates of brass may still be seen, is a square building, each side of which is two furlongs. In the midst rises a tower, of the solid depth and height of one furlong; upon which, resting as upon a base, *seven other lesser towers are built in regular succession,*" (Vide Calmet's Dic., Frag. III. 269.) Now whatever difficulty we may have in imagining from this account the general form and contour of the edifice, which would seem nevertheless to have been pyramidal, there can be no doubt as to the principal features of the plan, which consisted

of a vast base, surmounted by *seven other structures*; and thus we have that peculiar use of the number seven, which implies its mystical character, and indicates an origin of no ordinary kind, and which seems alone capable of satisfaction, when we trace it to the Divine institution of the sabbath at the Creation, and recognise in it a faithful memorial of that hallowed ordinance.

We further believe that a similar testimony is to be traced in those mighty monuments of antiquity, the stupendous pyramids of Egypt or Jizeh. The largest of these is confessed by all to be the most ancient, and the common surmise respecting it is, that it was the tomb of a certain king, Cheops. We doubt this entirely, and will endeavour to give our reasons for this as briefly as possible, and yet, as we think, conclusively against it. The authority for assuming it to have been the tomb of Cheops is that of Herodotus, who was so informed by the priests of Memphis, and that the time of its erection was about 900 B.C., or about 450 years before he visited Egypt. Others, however, have referred it to an earlier

period still, and supposed that the children of Israel were engaged in the labour of its construction while in bondage in Egypt. All these, and similar inquiries, appear to have entirely overlooked one remarkable fact, which will, we think, tend, more than anything else, to give an idea both of the age and people, by whom these oldest pyramids were built. Associated with them is the extraordinary colossal figure of the Sphynx, carved from the living rock in its native bed. Now the features of this figure are so decidedly Nubian, a variety, that is, of the African family, that there can be no mistake respecting the race they represent. But African, or Mizraitish dominion had been long overthrown in Egypt before the exodus of Israel, and, without entering particularly into the question at this moment, was, we believe, so overthrown when the new king arose who knew not Joseph. Nor was African power ever after in the ascendant there. Could it be probable, then, that the African features should be selected for so noble a work of art *after* the dominion of that race was past? The thing seems wholly incredible,



while the contrary is most plausible, that the Africans, the children of Mizraim the son of Ham, were in undisturbed possession and enjoyment of the land, whenever such a work as the Sphynx was conceived and executed. But the Sphynx and these early pyramids are manifestly of one date, and the pyramids therefore were also built by the children of Mizraim. That they were not tombs, but temples, General Wilford has shown by a great variety of arguments in the "Asiatic Researches;" and the general conclusion to which we are led respecting them, but especially respecting the largest, (for to that one more particularly do all our remarks tend,) is, that the building of it, by the sons of Ham upon their entrance into Egypt, was but the repetition of the sin, which had been already committed at Babel, and evidences the justice of the prediction awarded to the whole race of Ham, "Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren."

We believe, then, that the first, the oldest, and the largest pyramid was the work of some of those very hands that had laboured at Babel,

and, coming thence, they brought with them not only the conception of the original structure, but some of the primitive traditions of their race ; and of these we would suggest that there are indications of the sabbatical institution similar to those which Herodotus has recorded respecting the temple of Belus. Whoever examines the plan of the pyramids, which is to be found in the great French work, "*Description de l'Égypte*," must observe, that, on the same level with the great pyramid, and on a platform apparently prepared for them all, there are placed at equal intervals along the southern side of its base six lesser pyramids, all of equal size ; and thus we have not only the number seven indicating its mystical use again, but while the six small pyramids denote the six days of labour, the mighty and majestic seventh pyramid elevates itself to the heavens, an appropriate symbol pointing to the heavens, and intimating expressively, that the glory of the seventh day far transcended that of all the other six.

But even in modern times, there have been remarked by missionaries in Africa some in-

dications amongst the aboriginal inhabitants of the primitive institution of the sabbath. Some traces of it have been found in the territory of Ashanti. The arbitrary division of time by weeks, which can only be satisfactorily accounted for by the original institution of the sabbath, was evidently known among them before they had an opportunity to learn it from Europeans. The names of the days in the week, in the several branches of the Inta, or Ashanti language, are native terms; and may be traced in the national customs, backward to remote antiquity. The same day of the week is not, however, universally observed as the sabbath. When Mr. Freeman preached at Fómeenah, and explained the decalogue, Korinchi afterwards referred to the fourth commandment, and said he had entertained the belief, that God had appointed for each nation its own sacred day; that he had set apart one day for the Ashantees, another for the Fantees, a different one for the Wassaws, and others for other people. He could not, of course, support his belief by any show of argument: he had received it by tradition; and referred

Mr. Freeman for proof to the wonderful old Fetish man in the interior, who is supposed to know all things, and to be able to do all things. But the apprehensions expressed by several who were present at the discussion, that they would expose themselves to great danger, should they substitute the Christian sabbath for their own weekly Fetish day, is evidence of the influence which their superstitions exert on their minds. In all countries along the coast, the regular Fetish day is Tuesday, the day which is observed by the king of Ashanti. Other days in the week are held sacred in the Bush. On this weekly sabbath, or Fetish day, the people generally dress themselves in white garments, and mark their faces, and sometimes their arms, with white clay. They also rest from labour. The fishermen would expect, that, were they to go out on that day, the Fetish would be angry, and spoil their fishing; and in the interior, should a man go into his plantation on the sabbath, and by chance see a panther or a leopard there, it would be concluded that the Fetish, who knew his intention to labour, had sent its messenger

to prevent him from carrying his purpose into effect.

Such, then, in conclusion, are some of the indications or traces that traditionary knowledge affords us of an institution, that was beyond all doubt originally designed for the benefit and blessing, both temporal and spiritual, of the whole human race. And when we observe these traces of it running through the three great channels of mankind, and in various ways evidencing their common acquaintance with it, what can we thence infer, but that it was of primitive origin, and that its first original must have been in some long remote period of antiquity, when there was a common connection and common bond of union amongst the families from which all the present nations of the earth have descended?

## CHAPTER VII.

### TESTIMONY OF SECULAR MEN TO THE FITNESS AND BLESSEDNESS OF THE SABBATH.

“The sabbath was made for man.”—Mark ii. 27.

IN the view that we have hitherto taken of the sabbatical institution, we have chiefly regarded that which we believe to be its main end and design, the sanctification of man by means of his obedience to the commandment, “Remember the sabbath day to sanctify it.” In this way, and to this purpose, do we primarily and principally understand the declaration of our Lord, “the sabbath was made for man.” It was not needful to God, for He is perfect in holiness; and the sanctifying this day and employing it as He has ordained, cannot avail to the increase of His sanctification. The glory and the honour, indeed, are His, and meetly due to Him; but all the profit of the day, all the edification and spiritual improvement that it is capable of affording, these are His blessings, graciously

and freely bestowed upon man, for whom "the sabbath was made," that he by it, that is, by a faithful and hallowed observance of it, might grow in grace and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour.

But besides this blessed and hallowing influence of the sabbath, which is profitable to man's soul, there is also a benefit to his body arising out of the rest enjoined thereon, and which tends to the refreshment, renewal, and invigoration of his frame. Man, says the psalmist, is "fearfully and wonderfully made," and this chiefly in respect of his body. He is a marvellous machine, most curiously and ingeniously fashioned. Without use, that is, without exercise, his limbs fail to attain their full vigour, and his health is precarious; used too much, and overburdened with continual toil, his frame becomes enfeebled and decays prematurely. The necessities of life compel him to exert himself for his own subsistence. His exertions are repaid by the profits of his toil. His gains become an additional excitement to labour. He no longer works for subsistence only, but for the reward of gain, for the in-

crease of his wealth,—in a word, for “filthy lucre.” But now he is under temptation, and the lust for treasure urges him to task himself beyond his strength, to allow himself no relaxation, and to strive unremittingly to multiply his riches. Thus would he labour on a toilsome life of slavery, till death should teach him that he brought nothing into this world, neither can he carry anything out, unless there were some interruption to his labours, something that should interpose to give rest to his body, relief and relaxation from his toil. This, which he so much needs, and yet would not provide or allow to himself, God, his Father and his Friend, more careful, considerate, and compassionate of him than he is of himself, has graciously provided for him, and has so mercifully and wisely supplied him with a special season of rest and refreshment from toil, as he has of food and nourishment for his body. And in this way therefore it is manifest, that “the sabbath was made for man.”

Now we might be quite sure that this declaration of the Son of man is reasonable, right, and just, because He has made it; for to the



believer His word alone is sufficient. But since we have to write in defence and confirmation of its reasonableness, therefore it is most satisfactory to find eminently learned men, and such as are capable of judging in a matter of this kind, willingly giving their testimony respecting it, and by their evidence, the result of their own careful observation and lengthened experience, explaining and justifying the Divine appointment. Thus, for example, a physician of more than forty years' very extensive practice in the city of London, Dr. Farre, in the course of an examination he underwent before a Committee of the House of Commons, gave the following highly valuable statement:—

“ I have been in the habit during a great many years of considering the *uses* of the sabbath, and of observing its *abuses*. The abuses are chiefly manifested in labour and dissipation. The use, medically speaking, is that of a day of rest. In a theological sense it is a holy rest, providing for the introduction of new and sublimer ideas into the mind of man, preparing him for his future state. As a day of rest, I view it as a day of compensation for the

inadequate restorative power of the body under continued labour and excitement. A physician always has respect to the preservation of the restorative power; because if once this be lost, his healing office is at an end. If I show you, from the physiological view of the question, that there are provisions in the laws of nature which correspond with the Divine commandment, you will see from the analogy, that 'the sabbath was made for man,' as a necessary appointment. A physician is anxious to preserve the balance of circulation, as necessary to the restorative power of the body. The ordinary exertions of man *run down* the circulation every day of his life; and the first general law of nature, by which God (who is not only the giver, but also the preserver and sustainer of life) prevents man from destroying himself, is the alternating of day and night, that repose may succeed action. But although the night apparently equalizes the circulation well, yet it does not sufficiently restore its balance for the attainment of a long life. Hence one day in seven, by the bounty of Providence, is thrown in as a day of compensation, to perfect

by its repose the animal system. You may easily determine this question as a matter of fact, by trying it on beasts of burden. Take that fine animal, the horse, and work him to the full extent of his powers every day in the week, or give him rest one day in seven, and you will soon perceive, by the superior vigour with which he performs his functions on the other six days, that this rest is necessary to his well-being. Man, possessing a superior nature, is borne along by the very vigour of his mind, so that the injury of *continued* diurnal exertion and excitement on his animal system is not so immediately apparent as it is in the brute; but in the long-run he breaks down more suddenly: it abridges the length of his life, and that vigour of his old age, which (as to mere animal power) ought to be the object of his preservation. I consider, therefore, that, in the bountiful provision of Providence for the preservation of human life, the sabbatical appointment is not, as it has been sometimes theologically viewed, simply a precept partaking of the nature of a political institution, but that it is to be numbered amongst the natural duties, if the

preservation of life be admitted to be a duty, and the premature destruction of it a suicidal act. This is said simply as a physician, and without reference at all to the theological question ; but, if you consider, further, the proper effect of real Christianity, namely, peace of mind, confiding trust in God, and goodwill to man, you will perceive in this source of renewed vigour to the mind, and through the mind to the body, an additional spring of life imparted from this higher use of the sabbath as a holy rest. Were I to pursue this part of the question, I should be touching on the duties committed to the clergy ; but this I will say, that researches in physiology, by the analogy of the working of Providence in nature, will establish the truth of revelation, and consequently show that the Divine commandment is not to be considered as an arbitrary enactment, but as an appointment necessary to man. This is the position in which I would place it, as contradistinguished from precept and legislation ; I would point out the sabbatical rest as necessary to man, and that the great enemies of the sabbath, and consequently the enemies of man,

are all laborious exercises of the body or mind, and dissipation, which force the circulation on that day in which it should repose ; whilst relaxation from the ordinary cares of life, the enjoyment of this repose in the bosom of one's family, with the religious studies and duties which the day enjoins, not one of which, if rightly exercised, tends to abridge life, constitute the beneficial and appropriate services of the day. The student of nature, in becoming the student of Christ, will find in the principles of his doctrine and law, and in the practical application of them, the only and perfect science which prolongs the present and perfects the future life."

In the succeeding parts of his examination Dr. Farre was pressed very strongly upon the subject of the beneficial influence which tea-gardens and places of amusement are supposed by many to have on the labouring classes, who commonly spend the greater part of their sabbaths there, and after strongly contesting the alleged benefit of such places, he was asked, "If those tea-gardens were stripped of pernicious liquors, do you think they would be hurtful

to the health of society, or to those who frequent them?" To which inquiry he made the following faithful reply; "It is a dangerous question. To man, considered in his lower or animal nature, it would not be so prejudicial; but man is something better than an animal, and I think that devoting to pleasure the day of repose (which should be given to the rest of the body, and to that change of thought and exercise of the mind which constitutes the real sources of invigoration), amidst the multitudes congregated for purposes of pleasure, actually defeats the primary object of the institution of the sabbath, as adapted to the higher nature of man."

He then goes on to state thus, in answer to various other questions: "I have found it essential to my own well-being to abridge my labour on the sabbath to what is actually necessary. I have frequently observed the premature death of medical men from *continued* exertion. . . . I have advised clergymen, in lieu of the sabbath, to rest one day of the week: it forms a continual prescription of mine. . . . The working of the mind in one

continued train of thought is destructive of life in the most distinguished class of society, and senators themselves stand in need of reform in that particular. I have observed many of them destroyed by neglecting this economy of life.

“All men, of whatever class, who must necessarily be occupied six days in the week, should abstain on the seventh, and, in the course of life, would assuredly gain by giving to their bodies the repose, and to their minds the change of ideas suited to the day, for which it was appointed by unerring wisdom.”

This evidence is, perhaps, the most valuable that has ever been given on the subject of the sabbath, and is a beautiful instance of the application of science to prove how the Divine institutions are not only *graciously* but *wisely* adapted to man, both as a temporal and eternal being. If the Scriptures teach us that man is “wonderfully and fearfully made,” and that “the sabbath was made for man,” science, as applied by Dr. Farre, here steps in, and shows us how these are to be reconciled and understood,—that as a creature man is *wonderfully*

contrived and fashioned, and is so *fearfully* made that he [daily needs replenishment and refreshment; but that even his daily portion of rest is not adequate to all the depression and exhaustion, induced by over-excitement of mind, or too great exertion of body, and consequently that he needs additional rest to renew and restore him; and, lastly, that the sabbath was wisely, mercifully, graciously, and lovingly bestowed upon man, to provide him that help which his exhausted nature and wearied frame demand. How greatly, then, ought man to prize and treasure this blessing, how thankfully to enjoy it, how wisely to use it, and how faithfully to profit by it; while in all of these, the profit, use, enjoyment, and prizing of it, all should be done to the praise and glory of the Giver, by acting in accordance with his will, and endeavouring to promote the improvement and sanctification of our souls.

There are various classes in the community, whose occupations make them dependant upon the goodwill of others, their customers; and who are often forced by the thoughtlessness and indifference of the latter into a neglect of



the sabbath; and are in effect deprived by them of the right, blessing and privilege that God has bestowed upon them. The evidence given by various classes of tradesmen, both masters and journeymen, is largely to this effect, and cries loudly against the injustice done them by those who sacrifice these tradesmen to their own pleasure, and, as it appears, too often to the gratification of their own sins. Mr. M'Ewen, a master baker at Hampstead, states, that the charge for baking a dish of meat is twopence, and that the same meat might be boiled or roasted at home for threepence, so that the saving of expense is trifling; again, that some one member of a family being always left at home, that one might do the cooking without inconvenience, so that nothing is gained in that respect; further, that the trade of baking is very laborious and exhausting, so that the men absolutely require the physical rest for which the sabbath was designed; and, lastly, that there are not less than four thousand men in the trade who are debarred from rest and religious edification on the Sunday, by being compelled to work on that day.

The evidence of another master baker, Mr. Ellis, of Pimlico, is very just and expressive. He says: "I make no exception, that the feeling of the respectable part of the trade is, that our time, and that of our men, should not be devoted to the accommodation of the other part of the community. We feel, as men, that we ought to enjoy the day of rest, both mentally and morally; that we ought to be favoured, like the rest of her Majesty's subjects, with the freedom of the sabbath, to devote it in what way we thought proper. We cannot conceive that 4,000 or 5,000 bakers on the Sunday should be employed to cook the dinners of a great part of those dissipated characters, who, instead of attending a place of Divine worship, only spend their time in an immoral way, and who are tippling in the public-houses, and oftentimes coming for their dinners, after we have cooked them for them, in a state of intoxication. There can be no person who desires the welfare of the community at large, that could wish his fellow-creatures to be employed on that day; and any man of proper feeling would not wish for a moment that his dinner should be sent to the

bake-house to be cooked ; he would rather say, ‘ No, let that man have the liberty of enjoying his Sunday to himself.’ Another very great hardship is, that many young men come up to us from the country, who receive in their early days a religious education—when they come are obliged to devote nearly the whole of the sabbath to the toil and labour of the day ; they feel themselves degraded and lost in the scale of society, and not to hold that place which they ought to do ; and those good and moral impressions which they first received in their early days are entirely lost, from the continual practice of working on the sabbath day. It was my case. I received a religious education, and fortune drove me up here, after being five years and a half under proper tuition ; and the bake-house where I was, was opposite the church. I heard the bells of the church chime for Divine service on the Sunday when I was at work, but I was unable to attend it. I was then working in the heat of nearly 100 degrees during the morning, and that quite unfitted me to attend any place of worship afterwards, with any degree of instruction or satisfaction to myself ;

and I can but say, as a man, that I felt myself degraded in the scale of society, that I was not entitled, like any of my fellow-creatures, to attend a place of worship as others were."

Six other master bakers—Mr. J. Clew, of Carnaby-street, Golden-square; Mr. A. Hill, of Great Coram-street; Mr. W. Wighton, of Pimlico; Mr. J. Sweetland, of Howland-street, Fitzroy-square; Mr. J. Digby, of High Holborn; and Mr. A. Hannah, of Dorset-street, Manchester-square; all of them fully concurred in, and confirmed the previous testimony respecting their trade. Several journeymen bakers then gave evidence agreeing with that already given. Thus Joseph Marter, a journeyman, knew it to be the desire of the bakers generally, both from his own acquaintance, and from his having to do with a petition signed by 6000 or 7000 men, to have the Sunday secured to them by law as a day of rest. He says: "I can speak for myself: when I go to work I am so affected in the breath, from the heats and colds, that I can hardly stand in the bake-house; and the seventh day being made a day

of rest to me, would tend materially to prevent the effect upon the constitution which at present I am liable to, and *would renovate the constitution very much.*" Again, he says: "I have attended many public meetings of the journey-men bakers, and think that a great many of them, from conscientious motives, desire to have a day of rest, and feel themselves degraded by the present practice." Charles Viner, another journeyman, expressed himself quite as strongly as the preceding, and was confirmed by three others, John M'Ewen, James Shepherd, and James Moss.

Other trades besides were examined, and gave similar evidence. Thus Mr. J. Hollingworth, a butcher, in Paddington-street, Marylebone, speaking for himself and his next-door neighbours, Mr. Singleton, a fishmonger, Mr. Bolton, a cheesemonger, says, that "they would consider a more strict law not as a restraint, but as a privilege; they would take it as a blessing." In addition to the foregoing, poulterers, greengrocers and fishmongers were examined, and all concurred in the benefit that would arise to all parties concerned, buyers and

sellers, if there were a law protective of the sabbath, and protective of tradesmen on the sabbath, so that they should not be necessitated, as at present, in self-defence, to continue Sunday trading.

There are two classes of facts occurring in this evidence that demand the solemn consideration of all, and for that purpose require to be placed in such juxtaposition that they may be properly estimated. The one class is, that all the bakers, both masters and journeymen, and all the butchers, are unanimous in asserting, that the great mass of their Sunday purchasers are the dissipated, the drunken, the dissolute; those, in fact, whose habits of life make them indifferent to the real blessings of the sabbath, and that for them the tradesmen are compelled to labour on the Sunday. The other class of facts is, that the poulterers and the fishmongers complain that they are hindered of their sabbath, by "all the great men; the members of both Houses, and members of the administration likewise;" and that, in most fishmongers' shops, "masters as well as men are wholly employed during the day, and

more so on Sunday, because many noblemen and gentlemen who are members of Parliament, have more company on Saturday and Sunday, those being the only leisure days their parliamentary duties afford them." Leaving, then, these facts to speak for themselves, and being well satisfied with the evidence which these men of business have given as to the benefit and blessing that they know the sabbath to be capable of, we will proceed to adduce some from other sources.

Considerable care was taken some few years since to obtain information respecting the opinions and feelings of the large stage-coach proprietors, who, by running their coaches on the sabbath, both desecrated the day, and caused numbers of those employed in their service to neglect it, and the eternal welfare of their souls in consequence. This was felt to be so great an evil by the Rev. Herbert Smith, of Stratton, in Hampshire, in whose parish several coaches changed horses every sabbath, that he entered into a correspondence with some of the largest and most influential proprietors, and obtained very satisfactory replies from almost

all of them. They were Mr. Chaplin, Spread-eagle, Gracechurch-street ; Mr. Mountain, Saracen's-head, Snow-hill ; Mr. Nelson, Bull-inn, Aldgate ; Mr. Horn, Golden-cross, Charing-cross ; Mr. Charlton, George-inn, Hounslow ; Mr. Dore, Egham ; Mrs. Scarborough, Bagshot ; Mr. Forder, and Messrs. Curtis, Basingstoke ; Mr. Wells, Winchester ; and Mr. Caiger, Southampton. They all of them concurred, more or less strongly, in their desire to have the benefit of the sabbath for their establishments, and two of them in particular wrote thus upon the subject. The one writes : " I not only give my free consent to discontinue running our coaches on Sundays, but shall be most happy to render you any assistance in my power to obtain so desirable an object ;" and the other states : " I am quite ready to enter into any engagement with the other proprietors to prevent running on Sundays in future, and I trust no one I am concerned with will raise an objection to so desirable an object. I have expressed my disapprobation of stage-coaches travelling on the Lord's day, and no one would rejoice more at its discontinuance than myself,



being satisfied it would be for the general good, and which, I sincerely hope, may be accomplished through your kind interference."

Similar to this testimony, and more recently still, is that of Mr. Chancellor, who was well known as one of the largest and most respectable proprietors of carriages let out for hire in the neighbourhood of London. At a public meeting in favour of a better observance of the sabbath, held at Chelsea, Mr. Chancellor spoke as follows: "About four years and a half ago, it pleased God to turn my heart to Him, and I need not tell my Christian friends, that when the *heart* is changed, the *conduct* will be changed also. It then came into my mind that I was acting wrongly in allowing my public conveyances to run on the sabbath day, but I had great doubts what to do, for I knew that if I gave it up, it would be a loss of 500*l.* a year to me, and my family was large. I made it a subject of prayer to God, and at length my mind was quite made up on the subject. It is impossible to describe the peace and happiness which I have enjoyed since I made this resolution. I would not return to my former practice

if you were to lay 10,000*l.* before me. I always now, too, pay my men early on Saturday morning, instead of Saturday night; and great is the benefit which has resulted from it. I used often to hear of their joining in riots at the public-houses near on Saturday nights; but now nothing of the kind occurs—not one of my men is ever drunk, nor do I hear of their using improper language. Our Sunday is really a day of rest. It is delightful to me to see my men at church, and reading their Bibles; my wife and I distribute tracts among them on Sunday mornings, and they often come and ask me such questions about religion as quite stagger and astonish me. I desire not to speak thus in my *own* praise—to God be all the glory, for *He* has done it all. I wish many of my neighbours might be induced to follow my example; for they would find happiness from it *here*, and I am sure they would in heaven.”

Societies have been formed at various times for the purpose of protecting the sabbath, and ensuring a more faithful and religious observance. The resolutions engaged in by these

societies are most valuable, as being the testimony borne by those who entered into them, as to the nature and blessing of the sabbath, and the obligation upon all men to keep it. Such are those that were carried at a meeting held in the parish of St. Giles's, London; at which Mr. Justice Parke, Mr. Justice Patterson, Sir John Richardson, Sir James Burroughs, Sir George Rose, several gentlemen of rank, and many tradesmen of great respectability were present. The resolutions carried at this meeting were as follow :—

I. That it is our duty as Christians to observe the Lord's day religiously ourselves, and to promote its religious observance among all within the sphere of our influence and example.

II. That it is our duty to make such arrangements in our families, that ourselves, and every one of our household, may habitually attend divine worship; and not to employ unnecessarily any one to labour for us on that day.

III. That we ought never to allow any purchases, except in cases of sickness or other like

emergency, to be made on Sunday, either in the street or at a shop, for ourselves or our families; nor suffer any article of food or clothing to be brought unnecessarily into our houses on that day.

IV. We ought not to carry on business ourselves, nor to countenance such tradesmen as do it unnecessarily.

V. We ought to make our payments at such times as will enable those to whom our money is paid, to make their purchases before the Sunday.

VI. We agree to form a society on the principles of the above resolutions, and to use our best endeavours to cause the sacredness of the Christian sabbath to be observed among us, in a manner more worthy of a people fearing God.

In the same spirit, and with the same object in view, a declaration of the Bishop Wearmouth, Sunderland, and Monkwearmouth Auxiliary Society, for the promoting the due observance of the sabbath, was drawn up, containing the following resolutions:—

I. We declare, that we will labour, by the

help of God, to keep the sabbath day ourselves, by a regular and conscientious attendance at the house of God ; by abstaining, on that day, from any worldly business, from all parties at home and abroad, of worldly pleasure or amusement ; from attendance at the news-room, and other places of worldly intercourse ; and from all journeys which shall not be absolutely necessary.

“ II. That we will labour to have the sabbath day kept holy in our families, by requiring our children and household servants to attend at a place of public worship ; by not permitting them to pay or receive visits on that day, except in cases of necessity or mercy ; by affording them every reasonable opportunity, and holding out to them every proper inducement for the discharge of their private religious duties ; and by refraining altogether from employing persons in our service on the sabbath, in any way, not strictly necessary.

“ III. That we will also labour to promote the observance of the sabbath day in the place and neighbourhood wherein we dwell, by using our influence to prevail on those who have

workmen under them, to pay them on or before the Saturday morning; by discouraging the habit of sabbath breaking; by uniting with others in the endeavour to reclaim the sabbath breaker; and by spreading information on the subjects of the obligation to keep the sabbath, and the manner of keeping it, (especially by a due attendance at public worship,) to the utmost of our power."

Another society of the same kind was formed at Brentwood, the rules of which were as follows:—

"I. That no person entering this society pay his labourers on the Saturday or Sunday.

"II. That no member of this society purchase goods on the Lord's day.

"III. That no member of this society request any trades-person to send in any goods on the Lord's day, except dinners which may have been baked.

"IV. That members of this society pledge themselves not to exercise their callings on the Lord's day, otherwise than is allowed by law.

"V. That every member of this society endeavour to do his utmost in his parish and

neighbourhood to promote the reverence of the Lord's day, both by example and exhortation."

So, again, in the deanery of Cricklade, in Wilts, a similar society was formed, the rules of which, agreed to by the members, were these :—

"I. That we will personally endeavour, by the help of God, to abstain on the Lord's day from all business and intercourse of a merely secular nature, works of necessity and mercy excepted.

"II. That we will not pay our servants, labourers, workmen, or other persons employed by us, either on Saturday or Sunday.

"III. That we will close our shops and houses, so far as relates to the purposes of traffic, during the whole of the sabbath, and that we will ourselves abstain, and so far as our influence extends, we will require others to abstain, from all buying and selling on that sacred day."

This society was so successful, that, in many parishes, its declaration was most numerously signed, and that by all the most respectable farmers and shopkeepers, with scarcely any

exception; they thereby bearing their testimony to the value they attached to the sabbath, to the blessing they found it to be productive of to the masters and their dependants, and thereby to the truth of the Scripture that declares, "The sabbath was made for man."

But there are not wanting others, great and memorable for their learning, who have left upon record their judgment respecting the institution or excellency of the sabbath. Thus Lord Bacon, in his "First Book of the Proficiency and Advancement of Learning, Divine and Human," when tracing the gradual exhibition of knowledge or wisdom from God, its fountain or source, to spirits, thence to sensible and material things, the first of which was light, immediately thereafter remarks: "So in the distribution of days, we see the day wherein God did rest and contemplate his own works, was blessed above all the days wherein he did effect and accomplish them."

Sir Matthew Hale, in a letter to one of his children, thus records his testimony to the excellency of the sabbath, derived from his own experience: "I have by long and sound expe-



rience found, that the due observance of this (the Lord's) day, and of the duties of it, has been of great advantage to me. God Almighty is the Lord of our time, and lends it to us : and as it is but just we should consecrate this part of that time to Him, so I have found, by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observance of this day hath ever had joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time ; and the week that hath been so begun, hath been blessed and prosperous to me. And, on the other side, when I have been negligent of this day, the rest of the week has been unhappy, and unsuccessful to my secular employment ; so that I could easily make an estimate of my successes, in my own secular employments of the week following, by the manner of my passing this day. And that I do not write lightly or inconsiderately, but upon a long and sound observation and experience."

In another letter of advice, written in his sixty-fourth year, and addressed to his grandchildren, he thus more fully explains to them the result of his experience:—

"I will acquaint you with a truth, that above

forty years' experience and strict observation of myself hath assuredly taught me. I have been near fifty years a man conversant with business, and that of moment and importance, as most men, and in all this time I have most industriously observed in myself and my concerns these three things:—

“ 1. That whensoever I have undertaken any secular business upon the Lord's day, (which was not absolutely and indispensably necessary), that business never prospered or succeeded with me. Nay, if I had set myself that day but to forecast or design any temporal business, to be done or performed afterwards, though such forecasts were just and honest in themselves, and had as fair a prospect as could possibly be effected, yet I have always been disappointed in the effecting of it, or in the success of it; so that it grew almost proverbial with me, when any importuned me to any secular business that day, that, if they expected it to succeed amiss, then they might desire my undertaking it upon that day. And this was so certain an observation to me, that I feared to *think* of any secular business that day, because the resolutions

then taken would be unsuccessful or disappointed.

“2. That always the more closely I applied myself to the duties of the Lord’s day, the more happy and successful were my businesses and employments of the week following; so that I could, from the strict or loose observance of this day, take a just prospect and true calculation of any temporal successes in the ensuing week.

“3. Though my hands and mind have been so full of secular businesses, both before and since I was a judge, as, it may be, any man’s in England, yet I never wanted time in my six days to ripen and fit myself for the businesses and employments that I had to do, though I borrowed not one minute from the Lord’s day to prepare for it by study or otherwise. But, on the other side, if I had at any time borrowed from this day any time for my secular employments, I found it did further me less than if I had let it alone; and therefore, when some years’ experience upon a most attentive and vigilant observation had given me this instruction, I grew peremptorily resolved never

in this mind to make a breach upon the Lord's day, which I have strictly observed for above thirty years; this relation is most certainly and experimentally true, and hath been declared by me to hundreds of persons."

The same eminent and pious judge was also the writer of the following admirable and instructive stanza :

" A sabbath well spent  
Brings a week of content,  
And health for the toils of the morrow ;  
But a sabbath profaned,  
Whatsoe'er may be gain'd,  
Is a certain forerunner of sorrow."

Another eminent authority is the learned Mr. Justice Blackstone, who, in his celebrated " Commentaries on the Laws of England," writes thus: " Profanation of the Lord's day, vulgarly (but improperly) called *sabbath breaking*, is a ninth offence against God and religion, punished by the municipal law of England. For, besides the notorious indecency and scandal of permitting any secular business to be publicly transacted on that day, in a country professing Christianity, and the corruption of

morals which usually follows its profanation, the keeping one day in seven holy, as a time of relaxation and refreshment, as well as for public worship, is of admirable service to a state, considered merely as a civil institution. It humanizes by the help of conversation and society the manners of the lower classes, which would otherwise degenerate into a sordid ferocity and savage selfishness of spirit; it enables the industrious workman to pursue his occupation in the ensuing week with health and cheerfulness; it imprints on the minds of the people that sense of their duty to God, so necessary to make them good citizens; but which yet would be worn out and defaced by an unremitted continuance of labour, without any stated times of recalling them to the worship of their Maker."

Again, in one of the numbers of the "Rambler," by Dr. Johnson, there occurs a letter written by an imaginary person signing himself "Sunday," and both complaining of insults offered to him, and setting forth the benefits he is capable of affording. He thus writes: "I am liable to meet with perpetual affronts and injuries. Though I have as natural an anti-

pathy to cards and dice, as some people have to a cat, many and many an assembly am I forced to endure ; and though rest and composure are my peculiar joy, I am worn out and harassed to death with journeys by men and women of quality, who never take one but when I can be of the party. Some, on a contrary extreme, will never receive me but in bed, where they spend at least half of the time I have to stay with them ; and others are so monstrously ill-bred as to take physic on purpose when they have reason to expect me. Those who keep upon terms of more politeness with me, are generally so cold and constrained in their behaviour, that I cannot but perceive myself an unwelcome guest ; and even among persons deserving of esteem, and who certainly have a value for me, it is too evident that generally, whenever I come, I throw a dulness over the whole company, that I am entertained with a formal, stiff civility, and that they are glad when I am fairly gone.

“How bitter must this kind of reception be to one formed to inspire delight, admiration, and love ! to one capable of answering and

regarding the greatest warmth and delicacy of sentiments?

“Would men but receive my visits kindly, and listen to what I would tell them—let me say it without vanity—how charming a companion should I be ! To every one I could talk on the subjects most interesting and pleasing. With the great and ambitious, I would discourse of honours and advancements, of distinctions to which the whole world should be witness, of unenvied dignities and durable preferments. To the rich I would tell of inexhaustible treasures, and the sure method to attain them. I would teach them to put out their money on the best interest, and instruct the lovers of pleasure how to secure and improve it to the highest degree. The beauty should learn of me how to preserve an everlasting bloom. To the afflicted I would administer comfort, and relaxation to the busy.”

Again, we find Dr. Johnson, according to an entry in his journal, July 13, 1755, resolving thus :—

“Having lived not without an habitual reverence for the sabbath, yet without that atten-

tion to its religious duties which Christianity requires,—

“ I. To rise early,—and, in order to it, to go to sleep early on Saturday.

“ II. To use some extraordinary devotion in the morning.

“ III. To examine the tenour of my life, and particularly the last week; and to mark my advances in religion, or my falling off.

“ IV. To read the Scriptures methodically, with such helps as are at hand.

“ V. To go to church twice.

“ VI. To read religious books.

“ VII. To instruct my family.

“ VIII. To wear off by meditation any worldly evil contracted in the week.”

In introducing the name of Wilberforce amongst secular authorities, I almost feel constrained to apologize for doing so. He was so much the man of God, so spiritual in his affections, so holy in his principles, a scribe so well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, that he seems more worthy to be regarded as a divine than a secular man. But since he was not a clergyman, though of laymen most clerical;



since he was so distinguished a philanthropist, so eminent a member of the British Legislature, and a man such as nothing but the grace of God could make, his testimony respecting the sabbath, his exhortations as to its use and excellency, must needs be peculiarly deserving of our regard and attention. Faithfully rebuking the grievously inadequate conceptions that prevail respecting true practical Christianity, he eloquently exclaims,—

“Let us appeal to that day, which is especially devoted to the offices of religion. Do they joyfully avail themselves of this blessed opportunity of withdrawing from the business and cares of life; when, without being disquieted by any doubt whether they are neglecting the duties of their proper callings, they may be allowed to detach their minds from earthly things, that, by a fuller knowledge of heavenly objects, and a more habitual acquaintance with them, their hope may grow more ‘full of immortality?’ Is the day cheerfully devoted to those holy exercises for which it was appointed? Do they indeed ‘come into the courts of God with gladness?’ And how are they employed

when not engaged in the public services of the day? Are they busied in studying the word of God, in meditating on his perfections, in tracing his providential dispensations, in admiring his works, in revolving his mercies, (above all, the transcendent mercies of redeeming love) in singing his praises, ‘and speaking good of his name?’ Do their secret retirements witness the earnestness of their prayers and the warmth of their thanksgivings, their diligence and impartiality in the necessary work of self-examination, their mindfulness of the benevolent duty of intercession? Is the kind purpose of the institution of the sabbath answered by them, in its being made to their servants and dependants a season of rest and comfort? Does the instruction of their families, or of the more poor and ignorant of their neighbours, possess its due share of their time? If blessed with talents or with affluence, are they sedulously employing a part of this interval of leisure in relieving the indigent, and visiting the sick, and comforting the sorrowful, in forming plans for the good of their fellow-creatures, in considering how they may promote both the temporal

and spiritual benefit of their friends and acquaintance? or, if theirs be a larger sphere, in devising measures, whereby, through the Divine blessing, they may become the honoured instruments of the more extended diffusion of religious truth? In the hours of domestic or social intercourse, does their conversation manifest the subject of which their hearts are full? Do their language and demeanour show them to be more than commonly gentle, and kind, and friendly, free from rough and irritating passions?

“ Surely an entire day should not seem long amidst those various employments. It might be deemed a privilege thus to spend it, in the more immediate presence of our Heavenly Father, in the exercises of humble admiration and grateful homage; of the benevolent, and domestic, and social feelings, and of all the best affections of our nature, prompted by their true motives, conversant about their proper objects, and directed to their noblest end; all sorrows mitigated, all cares suspended, all fears repressed, every angry emotion softened, every envious or revengeful or malignant passion

expelled ; and the bosom thus quieted, purified, enlarged, ennobled, partaking almost of a measure of the heavenly happiness, and become for a while the seat of love, and joy, and confidence, and harmony.

“ The nature, and uses, and proper employments of a Christian sabbath, have been pointed out more particularly, not only because the day will be found, when thus employed, eminently conducive, through the Divine blessing, to the maintenance of the religious principle in activity and vigour ; but also because we all must have had occasion often to remark, that many persons, of the graver and more decent sort, seem not seldom to be nearly destitute of religious resources. The Sunday is with them, to say the best of it, a *heavy* day ; and that larger part of it, which is not claimed by the public offices of the church, dully draws on in comfortless vacuity, or, without improvement, is trifled away in vain and unprofitable discourse. Not to speak of those who, by their more daring profanation of this sacred season, openly violate the laws and insult the religion of their country, how little do they seem to enter into

the *spirit* of the institution, who are not wholly inattentive to its exterior decorums ! How glad are they to qualify the rigour of their religious labours ! How hardly do they plead against being compelled to devote the *whole* of the day to religion, claiming to themselves no small merit for giving up to it a part, and purchasing therefore, as they hope, a right to spend the remainder more agreeably ! How dexterously do they avail themselves of any plausible plea for introducing some week-day employment into the Sunday, whilst they have not the same propensity to introduce any of the Sunday's peculiar employment into the rest of the week ! How often do they find excuses for taking journeys, writing letters, balancing accounts ; or, in short, doing something, which by a little management might probably have been anticipated, or which, without any material inconvenience, might be postponed ! Even business itself is recreation compared with religion ; and from the drudgery of this day of sacred rest, they fly for relief to their ordinary occupations.

“ Others, again, who would consider business

as a profanation, and who will hold out against the encroachment of the card-table, get over much of the day, and gladly seek for an innocent resource in the social circle or in family visits, where it is not even pretended that the conversation turns on such topics as might render it in any way conducive to religious instruction or improvement. Their families, meanwhile, are neglected, their servants robbed of Christian privileges, and their example quoted by others, who cannot see that they are themselves less religiously employed while playing an innocent game at cards, or relaxing in the concert-room."

This quotation has been a long one, but I feel assured that it will not have been tedious to the reader, excellent as it is, from first to last. Coming, as it does, from one who, though a secular man, and one always deeply engaged in the duties of a legislator, and those of no ordinary kind—no mere honorary and indolent office, was, notwithstanding all his many avocations, "a master in Israel;" replete as it is with such admirable and pointed admonitions; bearing testimony, as it does, to all the holy

purposes of the sabbath day; it is most peculiarly valuable in the light we are now reviewing it in, namely, that of a secular man testifying to the nature, use and efficacy of the Lord's day.

Nor was his a barren testimony, devoid of fruit, to attest the soundness of the root that was in him. He was himself an example of what the Christian should be on the sabbath. The Rev. J. Scott, of Hull, in his funeral sermon for Mr. Wilberforce, observes, when speaking of his high veneration for the holy day:—  
“On each returning sabbath his feelings seemed to rise in proportion to the sanctity of the day, to a higher degree of spirituality and holy joy, which diffused a sacred cheerfulness to all around him. I have often heard him assert, that he never could have sustained the labour and stretch of mind required in his early political life, if it had not been for the rest of the sabbath; and that he could name several of his contemporaries in the vortex of political cares, whose minds had actually given way under the stress of intellectual labour, so as to bring on a premature death, or the still more

dreadful catastrophe of insanity and suicide, who, humanly speaking, might have been preserved in health, if they would but have conscientiously observed the sabbath." This testimony, again, is most important, and such as many legislators, lawyers, ministers of state, and others similarly employed, would do well to ponder over and take warning by.

We trust, then, that enough has been said upon the subject indicated by the title of this chapter, to satisfy the reader that it is not clerical men only who desire to see the sabbath recognised and honoured, as the infidel and the scoffer would insinuate, for their own benefit, and for the encouragement and support of priestcraft; but that there are many secular men who know and value the physical and spiritual blessings of the sabbath, and who rationally understand, and would faithfully apply the truth, "The sabbath was made for man."



## CHAPTER VIII.

### PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE GREAT PRINCIPLE OF THE SABBATH.

“If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day ; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable ; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words : then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord.”—Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.

. WE trust that we have made it sufficiently clear in all the preceding chapters, that the main characteristic, grace, and efficiency of the sabbath, consist in that impress of holiness stamped upon it by the primitive blessing pronounced when God rested from all the works that he had made, and blessed and sanctified the seventh day. And if in aught we have failed to accomplish what for the glory and honour of our God we have striven to do, we trust that the beautiful words of Isaiah

prefixed to these introductory observations, will supply what may be wanting, or confirm what has been rightly advanced, and lead us at once to the contemplation of this concluding branch of our subject, in which we propose to sketch the practical application of the principles we have endeavoured to develop.

Let us first, then, observe, that these principles are twofold ; the one requiring, that one day in every seven shall be cleared of all worldly occupations, engagements, thoughts, and conversation, so that earthly things shall be abstained from, and the day left free for other interests, employments, feelings, and intercourse ; the other requiring that every seventh day so set apart and cleared, shall be dedicated to the honour and glory of God, sanctified to his service, observed as holy in his sight, and regarded from first to last, from its commencement to its close, as “holiness unto the Lord.”

These twofold principles necessarily carry with them twofold privileges ; the one bestowing upon all men the rest and refreshment from toil, which nature itself dictates as needful for

the body, exhausted with six days' labour; the other bestowing upon all men this special period of time, as a holy and sanctified season, wherein to pay regard to the spiritual nourishment of the soul, and by a faithful observance of the commandment, that is, by keeping the day holy, themselves to be exercised in holiness, themselves therefore to grow the more in grace and in the knowledge of salvation, and thus by continued sanctification to become more and more meetened for that state, where all who come must be holy even as God himself is holy.

It must, however, be obvious to every thoughtful and reasonable mind, that, while the principles and the privileges we have referred to are both of them twofold, the first of each, namely, the clearing the day from worldly uses, and the rest from worldly engagements, are, both of them, though highly excellent and gracious favours to man, yet only subsidiary and preparatory to the second of each, which require the day to be sanctified, and man himself, by sanctifying it, to be exercised in holiness. The sanctity of the day, then, the keeping it holy, the honouring it with holy

thoughts, feelings, and pursuits, these are the essential part, principle, and glory of the whole institution ; and, in order to render it the more effectual to this, its good and blessed design, we propose, first, to show what the Scripture teaches respecting the clearing of and resting upon the seventh day, and then to exhibit, in all its fulness, grace, and glory, the application of the principle of keeping the day holy. In order to effect this the better, we will glean from Scripture as well its precepts as its examples on this point, and will classify them for consideration under the obvious heads of *what may be done*, and *what may not be done*, on the sabbath.

Of those things that may be done, the first to be noted is all that is needful in the engagements and exercise of public worship, for this is expressly provided by our Lord himself, as well as by the law of Moses even ; for, commenting upon the requirements of that law, he observes, that “ the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless.” All exertion, then, requisite for the due performance and participation in Divine worship is here

allowed; and included in this, of course, is all necessary journeying to the house of God and back, provided, of course, that nothing more than is absolutely necessary is here allowed. This, in fact, was the principle of the sabbath day's journey of old, which was not some supposed distance as arising out of peculiar circumstances, but it was expressly and only the journey to the house of God and back. This distance might have been, as it now often is, long or short, and is to be regulated, of course, by local circumstances. Its having come to be, as in the New Testament, a certain measure of distance, is only one example among many of the Jews regarding the sabbath in too rigid and pharisaical a spirit. The real principle of a sabbath day's journey is not to be satisfied by defining and fixing some exact limit, for this might, in many rural places at the present time, hinder many from profiting by the sabbath; but the real principle is to church and back. Neither more nor less than this will satisfy the just demands of the day and the commandment of God. More than this is undeniably wrong, and consequently all journeying

on the sabbath, other than to the house of God and back, is contrary to God's law. Less than this is insufficient, and without this just and reasonable journey we are not fulfilling the law of Christ, but are neglecting to assemble ourselves together in the presence of God.

What an awful system, then, is that of railroads, steam-vessels, and other public conveyances, which ply so largely and extensively on the sabbath, for the avowed purpose of facilitating journeys of pleasure away from the house of God, and encouraging sabbath days' journeys, which are all to the dishonour of God, the unnecessary toil and over-excitement of the week-wearied artizan or labourer, and the waste of that precious time and opportunity which the day is designed to afford for their souls' health and refreshment by spiritual edification, and exercises of devotion and piety! How much have they to answer for who thus tempt men from the service of their God and the care of their own souls, for the sake of that profit, which, being ill-gotten, must needs be eventually a loss instead of a gain.

Our Lord has given to us another great prin-

ciple to regulate the things that may be done on the sabbath ; for in this matter it is at once easier and safer to indicate principles than to discuss the exact and precise application of them. He has laid it down as a rule, that “it is lawful to do well upon the sabbath day,” and he illustrated his principle by many acts of mercy—healing, charity, and even necessity, that he either did or commanded to be done thereon. In the application of this principle every man must judge for himself. Only let him beware, that, in whatever he does, he “is fully persuaded in his own mind ;” and that he has his conscience in that happy state, that “he condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth,” but enjoys the satisfaction of knowing, that, whatever he does on the sabbath day, is all done to the praise and glory of God.

As regards the things that may not be done on the sabbath, the Scripture teaches us very plainly respecting them, if we will heed its instructions, and not fritter them away by such pretensions, as that they are unsuitable to our age, manners, and circumstances. These last

are the variable things of life, whereas the principles of the sabbath, having come from God, are, like their author, permanent and unchangeable. Thus, no ordinary work might be done on the sabbath, and all food was to be prepared the day before, as evidenced by the peculiar circumstances connected with the giving of manna in the wilderness. This was so strictly enforced, that no fire even was allowed to be kindled. All professional business, all trading engagements, all mercantile pursuits, are necessarily suspended on this day of the Lord; in a word, all that may interfere between God and man, all that may distract man's mind from a faithful and glad communion with his God on his own holy day, all this is contrary to Him who hath hallowed the day, or dishonour to His gracious appointment, and a destruction on our own part of the privileges, blessings and graces designed for us in it.

II. But while these two classes we have been considering serve to indicate to us what we should refrain from, and what we may allow ourselves to do, upon the sabbath day, yet such is the frailty of man's nature, such is his natural



antipathy to the most merciful and gracious designs of God, that he will be continually wearying himself, straining his conscience, and rendering the day irksome to him, so long as he contents himself with such considerations as these, and shrinks from the spirit and better principle of the day. So long as a man is looking to a law, and to certain prescribed rules of action, his religious principles, though so far well and profitable to him, are nevertheless wearisome and grievous, and this is the reason why so many feel the sabbath a burthen, instead of a delight, holy of the Lord, and honourable. What we have to strive for is the influence in our hearts of that spirit of holiness that sanctifieth the sabbath day, in order that we may fully enter into the spirit and principle of the day. Then shall we not be asking whether this thing is allowable and that forbidden, whether here we must refrain and there may indulge; but we shall have a certain test of all things, a safe principle to guide us, and a steady rule that will neither forsake nor mislead us.

The day is holy; we therefore must be holy;

all that we do must be consistent with holiness; and since holiness is to be its distinction and grace, the test of everything we do will be, is it holy—is it consistent with holiness—is it that which will be acceptable to the holy God—is it holy as he is holy? Let us observe how this principle would be our guide. It is proposed that we go to call on some friend, and to pay a visit to him; let us first ask ourselves, is the purport of our visit holy—holy to God, holy to our friend, or holy to ourselves? If not, it is not consistent with keeping holy the sabbath day. We are asked to join some party, either in an excursion abroad, or in society at home; let us ask ourselves again, is holiness the object of the invitation? will it be consistent with keeping holy the sabbath day? If not, it is contrary to the mind of Him who says, “Be ye holy, for I am holy.”—Do we find ourselves either accustomed to engage in, or suddenly pressed with some worldly business on the day, let us candidly consider, is this keeping it holy, is it holiness to the Lord thus to act? If not, it is offensive to Him who requireth holiness in the inward part. A journey seems urged

upon us by circumstances that appear to constrain, and thereby to justify it, and we readily yield to occasions of this sort, easily conceding the necessity for them ; but let us view them in the light of holiness, and reflect how far they are consistent with it, and there may be a resolute defiance of the principle, but there can be no deception about it ; for where we might pretend to necessity we cannot to holiness, and that which is inconsistent with holiness is inconsistent also with the holy day. Do we allow of and join in the desecration of the sabbath by the running of railway trains, the voyaging of steam-boats, the plying of public carriages on the day ? Let us reflect seriously, solemnly, and honestly with ourselves, as we shall do hereafter in the sight of God when we appear before him, as we shall do when we come to die, and shall wish that we had long before ; and let us faithfully ask ourselves, Are these things holy ? do they promote holiness unto the Lord ? do they add to the sanctity of the day ? do they aid the growth in holiness of those who employ, or of those who are employed in them ? If not, they are inconsistent

with the holiness of the day, and with Him who made it holy. Are we ourselves desirous of going forth upon the sabbath day to places of public resort, whether merely for exercise, it may be, as we profess, or for the pleasure of mixing in the crowds that there do congregate, to see the dresses and appearance of the company, their equipages and steeds; let us first reflect whether these things encourage or diminish holiness, whether they partake of holiness at all, and whether amid such scenes we can become more holy, or the day be treated as one made holy of God? If not, we are violating the command which says, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy." Or, it may be, that, shunning publicity, and preferring the more quiet enjoyment of a rural walk, apart from the busy hum and noise of more laborious pleasure-seekers, we hope to find in the meadows and fields seclusion suitable to our more peaceful feelings, and even to gratify ourselves, while we admire the beauty of the scenery, with this "lust of the eye." Let us still beware that we mistake not constitutional or habitual dislike to a crowd, a

preference for quiet, and an agreeable placidity, for that essential spirit that belongs to the sabbath, and on account of which it was made for man. None of these things are that “holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.” The highest intellectual admiration of the beauties of nature is no part of what the Scripture calls holiness. It may be applied to devotion, and warmed into religious adoration of God the Maker of all things, but it has often been found in men utterly wanting in holiness, and has even encouraged them so much in their own views of natural religion as to make them disregard the essential and distinguishing characteristic of revealed religion—holiness, as God is holy; and unless this be the object of your ramble, the most innocent one is inconsistent with the sanctity of the sabbath.

III. The INFLUENCE, which these holy sabbath principles cannot fail to have, ought not to affect the day alone, but should pervade the whole week, and by their weekly permanence assist and encourage the sanctification of our whole life. To promote this most desirable object, each sabbath day may be regarded as

the centre of each week, shedding its beams both prospectively and retrospectively, as we *approach, observe, and retire from* the holy day; and under these three heads we propose, in conclusion, to consider the sanctifying influence that the sabbath is capable of.

1. *Approaching the Sabbath.*—He who is a faithful and humble believer in the sabbath day will always live in a state of general and customary preparation for the sabbath. His household will be so regulated, his children and domestics so ordered, that the day shall be distinctly appropriated to its own hallowed design. His occupations, duties, business, avocations, professional engagements, or whatever may be the week-day order of his life, shall be so arranged and subordinated to the object of the sabbath day, that, as he debars not his body of the opportunities that six days afford him for labouring in its behalf, so he shall not mercilessly rob his soul of the seventh day that belongs to it, but render to it its due, and secure to it the season given to it by God for working out its own salvation, and dressing it for its eternal state. Although there are, I

fear, very many men of business, who more or less violate the sanctity of the sabbath, by giving heed thereon to secular concerns or professional calls upon them, I know but one profession that can ever have the pleas of necessity and mercy for doing so, and that is the medical. But even that profession would do well to attend to the admonition of the apostle : “ Happy is he who condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.” I remember once being present when a celebrated metropolitan physician was asked, how he reconciled to himself Sunday practice, which he engaged in quite as largely as on week-days, and his answer was, that he was compelled to *sacrifice* himself for the benefit of others; to which a boy who stood by replied in the well-known words of Scripture, “ to obey is better than sacrifice.” I have heard the very same reason assigned for Sunday bakings, that the man engaged in it *sacrificed* himself to allow others to attend the worship of God.

Now if there were no profit attending such sacrifices as these we might be disposed to allow some credit to them, though that credit

would not diminish the peril to the soul of him who made it. But when we see the alleged sacrifice turned to the profit of the individual, we call to mind again, and reiterate, the caution of the apostle, "Happy is he who condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth;" and we say to all such sacrificers, "have faith in God," and exhibit that faith by obeying the commandment and reverencing the ordinance of God. But besides the medical profession there is no other that can even make the semblance of a pretext for violating the rest and sanctity of the sabbath. The legal profession, which often does so, has no shadow of excuse for it. An instructive maxim of British law it is that Sunday is no day, that is, is not a legal day; so that certain legal acts are incapable of being done upon that day. And this maxim, so well known to all the profession, ought to be a continual warning to its members of the nature of the sabbath, since it is founded upon the separation of that day from secular uses, and its restriction to religious services alone. And if professional men, and men of business would learn to regard the day in the



same way that the law does, and clear it of all occupations, and hindrances to its sacred employment, they would soon be led on, by the blessing that rests upon it, to holier views and a more faithful application of it. And thus they would be constantly prepared for it, having their ordinary occupations so planned that none of them should intrude upon the day. It was an honour to the legal profession, and one that deserves to be recorded of them, that, when a few years since proposals were made for a Sunday delivery of letters in the metropolis, an immense body of the solicitors signed a protest against the plan, claiming for themselves that exemption from secular business which the sabbath of God has given to them, and the blessings of which they had from experience learned the value of. They were thus righteously engaged in securing for themselves that general preparation of the sabbath, which it is the bounden duty of all men to make, and they were in this matter an eminent and noble example well deserving of imitation.

But besides the *general* preparation thus spoken of, there is a *special* one also, that needs

to be particularized, as a guide and encouragement to those who would faithfully sanctify the day. George Herbert has well said,—

“ Let thy mind’s sweetness have its operation  
Upon thy body, clothes, and habitation.”

And if there be one occasion more than another when this should be so, the sabbath is that occasion. How do we dress and prepare ourselves; how do we order, decorate, and arrange our rooms when company is expected, and when we have invited our friends to a feast! Then are we to be seen in our best and handsomest attire, then are our reception-rooms relieved of all ordinary signs of occupation and work, and then are all things made ready, that our invited and expected friends may have fitting entertainment, and nothing may appear to mar their enjoyment. And should we do less upon the sabbath day?—Is it not God’s festival, when He graciously offers to visit us?—Shall we be unwilling and unprepared to entertain him, when He is waiting at the door and asking admittance? This day is an high day,—one dedicated to the noblest intercourse,

the most blessed entertainment. If some, receiving strangers, have entertained angels unawares, here is One waiting thy reception on the Lord's day, who is the Lord thy God! Oh, give Him welcome salutation!—Be ready for his coming. Let thy week-day way of life be laid aside, and let holiness to the Lord be on this your prime occupation. Let your tables be cleared of all ordinary things, and prepared meet for God's day. Let the Saturday evening be employed to this purpose, so that the work-box and the knitting-basket are set aside for the sabbath. Let all books of secular information, and especially all newspapers, be carefully put away, and not suffered to tempt to the desecration, or cast a blot upon the sacred day. And, above all, let the meals be prepared, let the viands for the day be made ready, and let there be no hindrances of any kind to the full enjoyment, and the faithful sanctification, of the day which God delighteth to honour.

It is indeed a hallowed and delightful feeling with which we can sit down on the Saturday evening, our worldly cares and business laid aside, our tables cleared for the coming sabbath,

our minds directed towards its advent, our hearts in order, and we waiting for the coming of our Lord. What refreshment to the wearied body and jaded mind, to anticipate the morrow's rest, and the morrow's sanctification. A day of peace is at hand : a day of holy joy and devout meditation. We go to rest expecting to wake up in rest, and to experience by faith a type, in its degree, of that Divine and heavenly rest that remaineth for the people of God. What glad and holy thoughts, then, should be ours ! glad at the approach of the appointed season of rest, holy as of Him whose season it is, and whose *fiat* has ordained it hallowed. We should prepare ourselves for it as if we were about to enter into His presence ; we should retire for the night with the faith of the psalmist, when he said, " I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest, for it is thou, Lord, only that makest me dwell in safety ;" and when we rise on the sabbath morn it should be with the feeling that the patriarch had when he awoke from the glories of his beatific vision and said, " This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven !"

2. *Observance of the Sabbath.*—And now at length the day of sacred rest has dawned. The morn itself glows with a feeling all its own. The busy hum of occupation is hushed. The toiling sons of earth refrain from their accustomed labour, and there is for the time a suspension of that part of the curse, which Adam's disobedience brought upon men, and which ordains, that "in the sweat of his face shall he eat bread," Gen. iii. 19. To-day they "eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God," Acts ii. 46, 47. The silence of the hours, disturbed only by the music of the morning chimes, affects the heart, and distinguishes the morning from others less sacred. The faithful heart, responsive to these holy sensations, feels itself attuned to the sounds and silence of the day, and sends up a grateful echo from its inmost <sup>\*</sup>seclusions. The deep piety of the renewed soul is awakened to hallowed thoughts and devout communings with God. He whose day it is, the Giver and the Sanctifier of the rest it brings, is felt to be nigh at hand, even at the door. His entrance is desired, and is vouchsafed to faith. And

the believer, realizing to himself the primitive appointment of the day, is made conscious of the verity and excellency of the word, "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all his work which God created and made."

One of the most comfortable sensations of rest from temporal care that I enjoy upon the sabbath, arises from the circumstance of my not being liable to intrusion and disturbment by the arrival of the post on that day. It is now some years since I forbade the delivery of my letters on the sabbath morning, and often when I have had reason to expect communications of a painful or perplexing character, it has been an inexpressible relief to know that on that day at least there is nothing to fear. For the day there is relief from anxiety or vexation, and the interval thus secured has given such refreshment, and consequent vigour to the mind, that the news when received on the morrow has been much more easily endured, than before it would have been. Those who have not tried this relief to the mind, can but little understand its efficacy, and the blessing it

would be to all rural districts, to be exempt from the intrusion of the sabbath-breaking post upon the day of rest. Instead of the governors of that wonderful system of communication, which gives no rest day nor night to its functionaries, endeavouring to introduce a metropolitan delivery, upon the plea that the rural one that exists is beneficial and right, they should reverse their argument, and correct such a perversion of it, by showing, what is the truth, that the metropolitan relief from delivery is the blessing that should be extended to the country, and that the exemption enjoyed by London should be secured to all the remotest parts of the kingdom. Why is it that hitherto London has been blessed by this freedom? Because to do otherwise was felt to be sabbath-breaking, upon too great a scale for the legislature to sanction. The minor evil, as it was so termed wrongly, for "all unrighteousness is sin," was deemed admissible because it was small. But now it is pretended that the inferior and avowedly wrong example may override the larger and the right one, and that the greater and better must give place to the less and the worse.

Is this the even-handed justice of Protestantism? Does it not rather savour of Jesuitism, which does not sanctify the sabbath, or even of Infidelity, which abhors it? Surely Englishmen will never be so untrue to themselves as to submit to such an infliction as this. But if they do, if they will be so pusillanimous in behalf of God's holy day, then turn we to Scotland, and there invoke the ardent sanctity of her sons, and summon them to the rescue, and to the defence of the Lord's day against the mighty.

What impressions, indeed, does a sabbath spent in Scotland make, and how delightful is it from time to time to revive them in all their fulness. Long may I remember how, on one occasion, I stood on a sabbath morning in Edinburgh, at the window of a friend's house, and, conversing with a truly Christian believer on the exemplary observance of the day, we gave utterance, with one voice as it were, to a common sentiment, that for the moment pervaded our thoughts. Not long before had we returned from an early service in a neighbouring church, and calling to mind the striking solitude of



the streets we had traversed, and now looking abroad upon those in our immediate vicinity, we mutually expressed the thought, that “the city seemed more like the abode of the dead, than that busy scene of life and intelligence which the day before it had presented.”

And yet, anon, we had to witness a change and a contrast as extreme as could well be imagined. The bells commenced their calls to morning worship, and we turned from our contemplation to obey their summons. We went forth into the streets, and took our way to our chosen place of worship. But, now, what a sudden change had come upon every street and square! All that before was apparently lifeless and void, was now thronged with flowing streams of faithful and devout worshippers going up to worship their God, and to do public honour to the day of His appointment by keeping it holy; and themselves thereby increasing in holiness. Animated by one heart and one mind, and obedient to the common call, the whole city seemed upon the instant to be summoned into life, and to be raised up at the cry, “the Bridegroom cometh,” to go forth at His bidding,

and to enter into His gates with praise. Well would it be for England, if, instead of striving for the sake of the gain that perisheth to intrude her sabbath-breaking railway trains upon Scotland, she would in her own metropolis emulate the devotion of her sister, and remember the Lord's day to keep it holy.

Chief amongst the means of doing this, that is, keeping holy the sabbath day, is a constant and devout attendance on the public services of the sanctuary. It is an apostolical injunction, "not to forget the assembling ourselves together, as the manner of some is." The honour we are bound to pay to the day, and thereby to the Lord, is not to be done in a corner. I have known the avowed infidel seclude himself on that day, because he would not pay even worldly respect to it, by habiting himself in his better garb, but purposely dressed himself worse on that day than on any other, to mark, as he thought, his neglect of it. I have known the careless and unawakened sinner refuse to come to the public means of grace, because he was indifferent to the eternal welfare of his soul. But I never, never knew the sincere believer

absent himself without urgent cause,—nor in fact would it be possible for him to do so, since he could not refrain from joining in the public exercises of prayer and praise, to which his faith, his hope, and his heart's best affections prompt him. Nor is he contented with only one attendance at the house of God. With him, to sanctify the day is not to visit once only, and formally, the place of worship; but it is to be there whenever it is opened, and the opportunity is afforded him of renewing the praise and thanksgiving which are due to God, and of profiting by the word preached. There, on the day of God, he comes into the assembly of God's people; there he rejoices to maintain, not a solitary and secret communion with God, but an open and a public one;—one in which heart unites with heart, and tongue responds to tongue. There does it rejoice him to be, “believing with the heart unto righteousness, and with the mouth making confession unto salvation;” there does he join, in “making supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving thanks for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peace-

able life in all godliness and honesty;" and there does his soul rejoice, and his spirit is made glad, in singing psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, and making melody in his heart to the praise and glory of God.

One most admirable and instructive mode of employing a portion of time on the sabbath, and so diversifying its hours, is by assisting in the spiritual nurture of the young, and guiding them in the ways and counsels of God. A more profitable sanctifying of the sabbath, both to ourselves and to others, than attending and assisting in sabbath-schools, there cannot be. It were almost to be wished that the name of school, which implies labour and compulsory instruction, could be withdrawn from such meetings, and they solemnized by prayer and praise into devotional reading of the Scriptures suitable to the day.

As in public worship and in the house of God the day is to be sanctified, so also it is to be in our family converse, and at home in our own abodes. In public worship there are that order and continuance in the service, that leave no opportunity, save to the indifferent, for the

mind straying from the main glory of the day, and neglecting to sanctify the Lord God in the heart. At home, however, and in the family, there is danger of our forgetting it, and suffering our thoughts and conversation to return to the world and its engagements. How many, as they pass the threshold of God's house, seem to think that they are relieved thereby from all further reverence for the day ; that, having attended public worship, there is no further privilege to enjoy ; and that, because they have quitted their place of worship, they have returned again to the world and its occupations. Yet it is quite as needful, and quite as blessed, to sanctify the day in our family, as in the congregation of the Lord : only in doing so we may safely and wisely relax from the strictness of order and method that are required in public. There may be a variety in our ministrations at home. There should be reading of the Scripture, and singing of hymns, and these, especially the latter, may be much diversified, according to the taste and proficiency of those who join in them : only let there be caution that the hymns be really edi-

fying, and that the music also be *only unto edification*. Some deceive themselves by allowing the enjoyment of *sacred* music on the sabbath day. Now music, however enchanting to the senses, is not edifying to the heart and affections. Music can never convey to us spiritual knowledge. It can excite the affections, but cannot spiritualize them. Music alone, therefore, without edifying and instructive words, that is, sentiments and thoughts, is no means of sanctification ;—consequently music alone, even sacred music, is not suitable to the Lord's day. On the contrary, it might, if indulged in, mislead us into the notion, that, because denominated sacred, it must be sanctifying, and so occasion us to miss entirely the one great design and end of God's appointment, even the sanctification of our soul.

In reading Scripture, as in singing, we should be careful to make edification, real spiritual, scriptural edification, our single aim. Here, again, we are liable to deceive ourselves. Neither the history, nor the poetry, nor the marvels even of Scripture, are necessarily edifying. Bear in mind that golden canon for

reading unto edification, “the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.” We may find ourselves deeply interested in knotty points of the history of God’s people, we may be charmed by the poetical beauties of the word, we may admire the wondrous miracles which God’s power hath wrought ; but all these may be of no avail to us in enlightening and sanctifying our soul. We must endeavour to spiritualize what we read, not by any fanciful perversion of our own, but by drawing forth from the portion read the lessons of love, mercy, condescension, and grace, which are to be found as fine gold, running through the text of Scripture, as the rich ore is to be traced and followed through the parent rock in which it is secluded. We must search for the deep things of God ;—we must unravel the mysteries of His providence and grace. Like Daniel, the man greatly beloved, we must use such means as we have to understand all mysteries ; and if, like him, we apply ourselves “to understand by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord hath come to the prophets,” we may be sure that God will give us “the spirit of wisdom and understand-

ing, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, and shall make us of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord."

There is, innate in man, a fondness for inquiry into secret things, and discovering the design and purport of revealed mysteries. This disposition often wastes itself, in the vain and ridiculous practice of striving to solve frivolous and impertinent involutions of words and things, purposely perverted to perplex, and so to excite and exercise that ingenuity of mind, which has been wisely given to us of God for great and noble uses. To this excellent end does the skilful mathematician worthily direct those mental energies, which others debase to the unravelling of some charade or conundrum, and thereby show what man's reasoning intelligence is capable of attaining to, when wisely and faithfully directed, in the exploration of the wonders of creation in space, and the exhibition of God's great power and wisdom. And why should not the Christian philosopher be employed in the examination of God's grace revealed to us in the sure record of prophecy?—Whether we desire enigmas to charm, dark



sayings of old to unravel, mysteries of Providence to scan, or wondrous revelations to unrol, where shall we find any so worthy of our intellect, as those which God, the Almighty, the Allseeing God, has written for our edification in prophecy? And if we desire variety of reading for the sabbath day, and exercise for our intellectual powers, always, of course, under a spiritual influence, what better subjects can we have, than those prophetical Scriptures written for our learning, and upon the perusal of which the blessing is recorded, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand?”

But if the sabbath is suited for, and sanctified by, public and family devotions, not less is it adapted to, and hallowed by, private communings with God. How pleasant and how profitable it is, to retire as it were into one’s self, to converse alone with God, to examine our own hearts in His sight, and to experience the blessedness of the promise, “Draw nigh to Me, and I will draw nigh unto thee, saith the Lord.” What day or what occasion can be

more suitable than the sabbath? It would lead us too far astray from our present more immediate object, to attempt to touch upon the subject of such communings. Suffice it, that we thus point out this as one of the most effective modes of sanctifying the sabbath day.

Some over-scrupulous exactors of sabbath discipline have objected to *walking* upon the day, as if inconsistent with the notion of rest. Now rest is not mere repose, for even that may become wearisome, and by being so destroy our rest. But rest is the placid and untoilsome exercise of the body, tending to the refreshment and comfort of our limbs, and to this end walking, in moderation and peacefulness, will often be an assistant. If, in addition to this our walking be, not amid the busy throng of the worldly and dissipated sabbath-breakers, but in quietude, amid the works of nature, that is, of God, in sweet converse with friends of congenial and spiritual minds, such walking is quite as faithful a sanctifying of the sabbath-day, as the most solemn sedentary intercourse at home. Did not God customarily walk with his new-made and holy creature Adam in the

cool of the day; and must not such walking have been blessed rest and refreshment to our prime father? When Isaac went forth to meditate in the field at eventide, was not his occupation a devout and hallowed one? And so may any act of ours, within limits due and prescribed, be made to us a means of sanctifying the sabbath, and honouring God thereby.

But beware lest walking be suffered to degenerate into *straying idly*, or *journeying wantonly* on God's day. Against the latter especially there is the greatest need to be on our guard: the mischief done by it is very fearful; for often it is ourselves who are least affected by it, while multitudes are involved in our sin. It may be that we do so only now and then, but once or twice in a year; not habitually, but occasionally; and that only as some apparently urgent necessity demands; and thus we think our fault venial because small, and become indifferent to it. But that which we do now and then, others think themselves at liberty to do now and then,—and thus the evil is multi-

plied. But worse than this, our *occasional* sin is the cause of constant and habitual sin in others. Our *occasional* sin encourages travelling on the Lord's day, and multitudes are kept waiting and looking out for the *occasional* traveller, from sabbath to sabbath, who else would not be tempted away from their allegiance to God and his holy day. Oh that there were such love to God, and to the souls of our fellow-men within us, that we would remember His commandment, and have such compassion upon others, as never to cast a stumbling-block in their way, nor by any act of ours cause our brother to offend, and destroy him for whom Christ died !

3. *Retiring from the Sabbath.*—How is it with the world, and with pleasure-seekers ? As men return from the market or the fair, what are their thoughts as evidenced by their conversation ?—Of buying and selling, of bargaining and gaining, of profit and loss, of the rise and fall of prices, of their probable increase or decrease for the future. And why is this ?—Because their interest, their hopes, their trea-

sure are in these things, and therefore their heart is there, for “where the treasure is there is the heart also;” and “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Again: as men return from the theatre, the race-course, the pleasure fair, or any place of public amusement, what are their thoughts as evidenced by their conversation?—In the spectacle they have witnessed, the mimic representation they have seen, the company that was there, the dresses and looks of the people, the richness and the splendour of the equipages, the excellency of the horses, the fairness or unfairness of their management. And why all these topics?—Because these were the objects for which they went, upon these were their whole thoughts and minds intent; they return absorbed in the interest of these; their hearts are full of them, for they are the day’s treasure, and “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” But with how many of our sabbath worshippers is it thus? How many even on that holy day, when they have passed the threshold of God’s house, think of the Scripture they have

heard read, or the word that has been preached? In how many hearts lingers there yet any echo of the hymn that has been sung, professedly to the praise and glory of God? Few, few are they, who thus find treasure there, and carry it forth with them. Their hearts are not engaged, and they have no abundance of spiritual things for the mouth to proclaim. And is it not too often thus, alas! in the end of the sabbath, in retiring from the sabbath? And should it be thus? Oh, surely not. Let us reflect upon what should be our thoughts and feelings on leaving this holy day, and what the impressions we ought to carry thence with us.

If our sabbath has been spent in faith and calling upon God, we have been nigh unto Him; we have felt His presence, we have experienced the joy and delight of communion with our God and Saviour. The influence of these feelings we ought to carry away with us, so that they shall be seen and known to the world, and men may "take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus." But chiefly we ought to have them in our own hearts, impressing us with

holiness, peace, rest, and quietude. Our sabbath occupations should dwell in us and be with us; they should strengthen us to meet, to engage with, and to overcome the temptations that our daily avocations bring with them. Oh, if our sabbath resolutions were more remembered, if the mind and the spirit with which we participate in the holy services of the day, or which are excited in us by hearing the word preached, were more heeded and treasured up, were carried away with us in our heart, allowed to have their influence there, and thence to pour forth their abundance in sincerity and truth, how blessed indeed would the effects and increase of such sabbath be. We should then retire from it, not with lightness of thought and feeling as if ridding ourselves of a burthen, not as if throwing off some trammel to our worldly course and duty, but comforted, and invigorated by it for our business, gladdened and delighting in the thought that it would return again, and rejoicing that we had gathered from it so much experience of the employment of angels, and of the spirits of the

just ; and we should be confirmed and strengthened in the conviction, that, as on earth there is a weekly sabbath of rest for those who confide in their God, so in heaven above and in the presence of the Most High there remaineth a sabbath of rest for ever and ever.



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